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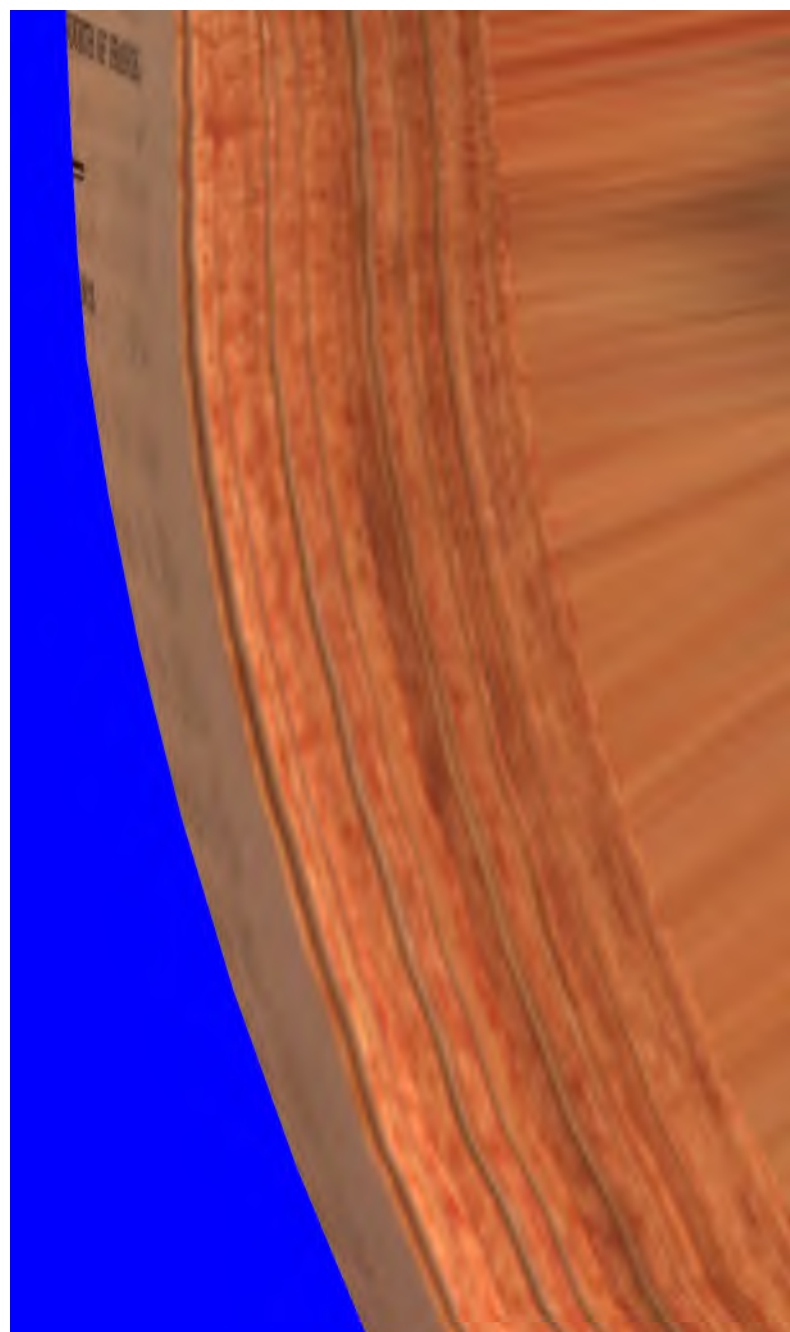
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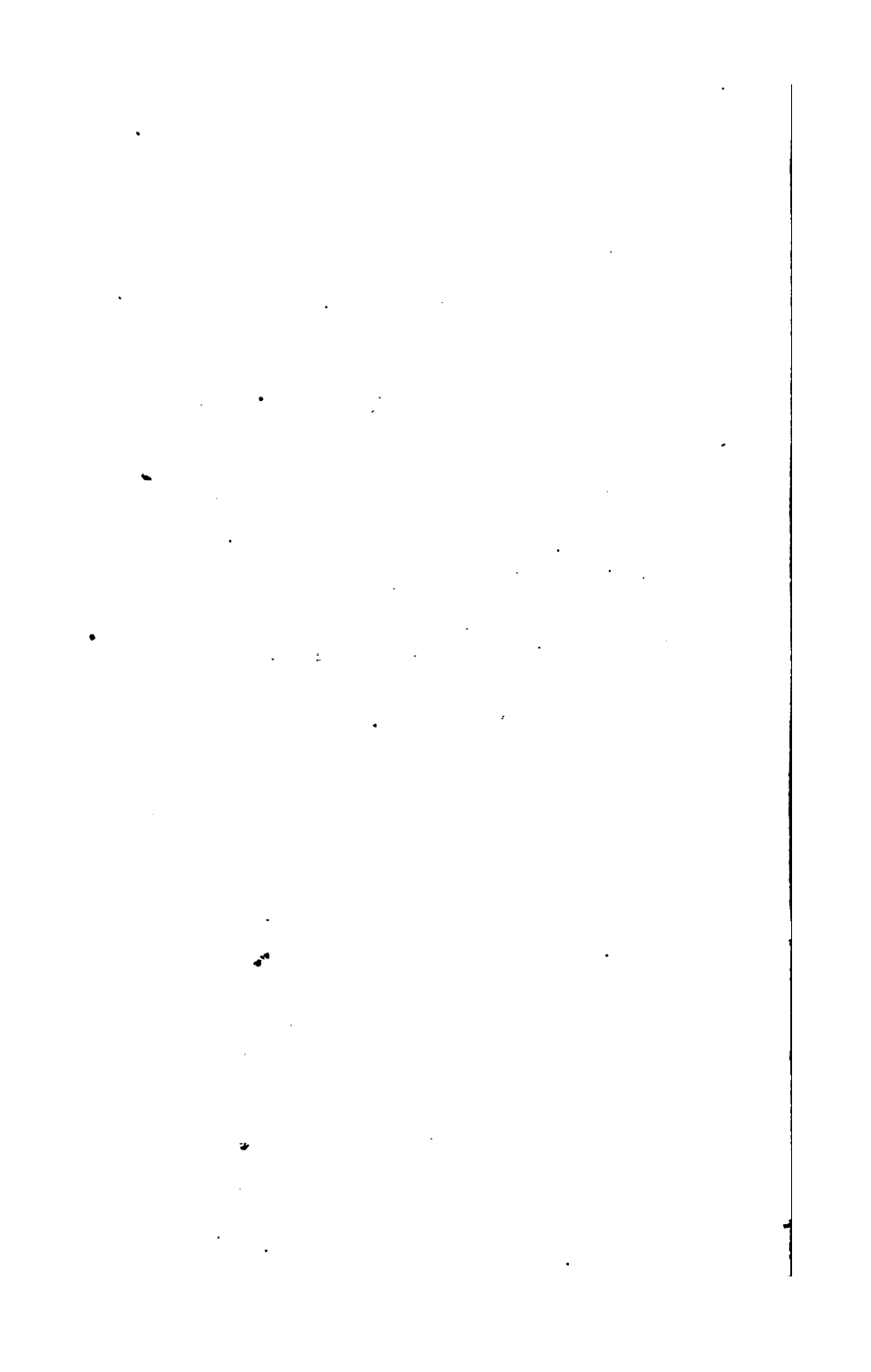


HENRY THE FOURTH OF FRANCE.



A ROMANCE.

Printed by J. Darling, Leadenhall-Street, London.



J. H. 1826.

HENRY THE FOURTH OF FRANCE.

A Romance.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY ALICIA LEFANU,

AUTHOR OF

MEMOIRS OF THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF MRS. FRANCES SHERIDAN; DON
JUAN DE LAS SIERRAS; HELEN MONTEAGLE; LEOLIN ABBEY;
TALES OF A TOURIST; &c.



As I wound through the passes of the hills, tracked the winding rivelets, or climbed the rugged rocks, HENRY seemed always present to my view—The hero so worthy of his country and his people; whose reign was the real epoch of French glory, and whose name is a rallying word for every thought ennobling to humanity.

Birth of Henry IV.

VOL. I.

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1826.

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HENRY THE FOURTH OF FRANCE.



A ROMANCE.

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"Come, for, ah! to-morrow's ray,
Points to different scenes, your view;
Leads to distant plains the way—
Leads to fame, but danger too.
"And must the brave indeed depart,
Who now, e'en now, our pleasures shâre?
For them the virgin's tear shall start—
For them shall flow the minstrel's prayer!"

Such were the sounds, that at the castle of St. Remey welcomed the approach of a chosen band, led by the duke de Joyeuse, favourite of Henry the Third, king of France. A blaze of splendour adorned the scene, that seemed to emulate the day. The Gothic hall, illuminated from one end to the other, displayed shields, banners, and trophies, in which the fleur-de-lis, in white, in purple, in azure, and in gold, was every where repeated. The wreathed pillars of light, and the richly-stained and painted windows, exhibited the same favourite decoration.

These testimonials of rejoicing were adopted

adopted in consequence of the recent peace signed by the king of France, in which he engaged to join forces with the Holy League: this peace was known by the name of the treaty of Nemours.

In consequence of this newly-signed treaty, the destination of the army, sent under the duke de Joyeuse into Normandy to oppose the operations of the League, was totally changed; and his new instructions commanded him to lead his troops without delay against the magnanimous enemy and presumptive heir of Henry of Valois—Henry, king of Navarre. Private orders also signified to him that he was not to pass through Normandy without doing homage to the principal vassal of the crown there—a lady, but one endowed with a masculine spirit, enclosed in beautiful and feminine form. The countess of St. Remey lived in almost regal state in Normandy; and the court owed to her those solid obligations to which the most unbounded loyalty, united to the

liberal expenditure of her ample revenues in the cause nearest her heart, confirmed her claim.

The martial strangers were welcomed by a circle of the fair and brave, consisting of the flower of the Norman noblesse, assembled at the castle of St. Remey upon this joyful occasion. As yet the mistress of the mansion had not appeared—a sweeter burst of symphony now announced her near. Advancing, in the pride of conquering beauty, she welcomed, with words of gracious import, each invited guest. Groups of lovely girls surrounded her, bearing in their hands golden baskets, filled with white and odoriferous lilies, the emblems of loyalty and devotion; and these they distributed in profusion to the assembled visitors. None could refuse, under such auspices, to attach the bunch of lilies in their hair, or to their dress; though some hearts were there that beat for Guise alone, and some

that

that, turned in secret to the interests of Henry of Navarre.

The music had ceased. Led by the gay and gallant favourite of France, the companions of his arms passed in "radiant file" along the storied hall, and each was by him presented to the lovely mistress of the feast. To a young man of most interesting appearance and uncommon beauty, the duke addressed, with an air of deference and in a low voice, a few words, in which were included the question, under what name he chose to be introduced?

He replied—"As a soldier of fortune—the younger son of a good family—Cadet le Perle*."

The stranger's dress of blue satin embroidered with gold, and his mantle of the same colour, exhibited no rich jewellery, such as was then profusely displayed at
B 3 court;

* The real name and rank of this hero, and the cause of the cognomen "Cadet le Perle," will be found in the memoirs of the times.

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court; a single pearl, of the greatest beauty and magnitude, fastened that mantle at the shoulder, and seemed to suggest a reason for the name (in every sense a *nom de guerre*) which he had assumed. Kneeling to the countess, he held, with humble respect, in one hand his hat and plume of snowy white, while with the other he presented a packet that the queen* had expressly charged him to deliver into the lady of St. Remey's own hands.

The countess looked with reverence on the silken thread that bound it, and her heart throbbed with exultation at this new proof of royal confidence. Observing this was no place for examining such communication, she hastily secured the precious deposit, and resumed the conversation, that had been interrupted, with her wonted affability and ease.

None marvelled that affairs of state should mingle with the moments devoted to pleasure. Female influence in politics, and

* Louise of Lorraine, queen of France.

and female devotion to a party, were qualities deemed neither surprising nor unbecoming, in an age and country in which ladies of rank (from the noble "*dame du château*," up to the royal "*fille de France*") piqued themselves on the zeal and success with which they interfered in public transactions of the most momentous importance.

The kneeling cavalier had not gazed with insensibility on the charms of the countess,—more bright and bewitching in the modest simplicity of her array, than attired in all the splendour of a court. He admired her soul-breathing smile, the heaven of her blue eye, and the restrained luxuriance of her beautiful hair, braided with lilies—a decoration substituted in the place of costlier ornaments, because the countess had, with a self-devotion worthy of a better cause, cheerfully sacrificed all her jewels to meet the exigencies of the state.

This little fact, lightly touched upon

by the countess with the dexterity by which she knew how to place all her actions in the fairest point of view, was received by the gallant Joyeuse with that glow of grateful admiration by which a French courtier of that day referred every thing to his sole principle of action—to live or die as duty might decide, for the honour, the service, or the pleasure of his king.

How to pass the fleeting moments most agreeably seemed now the sole concern of every guest. While some of the more elderly nobles of the province were engaged in parties at games of skill, not sorry (as has been somewhere remarked) to have it afterwards to say, during the long winter evenings of the country fire-side,—"I lost a hundred to Bethune"—"I lost two hundred louis to Joyeuse, the favourite of France," the younger groupes formed themselves into dances, in which the beauties of Normandy mingled with the stranger knights, nothing grieved at
the

the unlooked-for chance that gave them a glimpse of the gallant cavaliers of the court of Henry the Third.

The anti-room of Catherine de Medici could scarcely have produced a bevy of bright dames surpassing the fair figures that now gracefully glided, now glanced light as air, beneath the gilded roofs of the castle of St. Remey; and the knights of Joyeuse's train enjoyed the passing hour with that peculiar zest which distinguishes the abbreviated but keen enjoyments of the soldier:

To-day we feast and hear the song,

To-morrow we break the spears*.

Such is, in all ages, the brief but comprehensive picture of the military life; not should it be a subject of regret or reproach with those who are exempted from similar dangers, that the idea of the sufferings he voluntarily endures ever casts an additional shade of interest round the warrior,

* Ossian.

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rior, leading the social mind to sympathize in his transient pleasures, and participate in his succeeding pains.

While all was thus gaiety and mirth, it was the more surprising to see one of the circle, who, by his youth, grace, and good mien, seemed most particularly suited for this diversion, renounce it altogether for the conversation of one of the household of the castle, with whom he stood just under that division of the hall which would, in modern times, be termed the orchestra.

Cadet le Perle had sought, with a smile of frank and gracious recognition, this old acquaintance, whose dress and appearance announced him to be a personage of no mean pretensions. Though advanced somewhat in years, his eye sparkled with uncommon fire, and his dress was as gay as his countenance: it consisted of a doublet and mantle of green taffeta, embroidered with roses; and, instead of the bunches of lilies which were so ostentatiously

tiously displayed by every other adherent to the house of St. Remey, a flaming bouquet adorned his buttonhole, consisting of a golden violet, an eglantine of silver, and the joy-flower, or yellow acacia, mingled together, and curiously wrought in miniature imitation of those which were distributed as poetical prizes. By this mystical type, all whom it concerned might know that the sieur de Chastelar was a poet, who, at the Tolosan games had thrice carried off the prize, as the happy author of the best song, the best pastoral, and the best ballad, which had been offered for competition; and that he had duly taken his degree as a doctor in the heavenly art of poetry, or (as it was denominated in the cradle of its birthplace) "*la gaie science*." A portrait of the far-famed Clemence Isauze, foundress of the Floral games, was suspended by a broad blue ribbon round his neck—a relic as dear and sacred in the eyes of Aimar de Chastelar as a Waterloo cross or medal to the modern warrior.

The cadet had chosen the moment when all hearts were apparently devoted to the joyous intoxication of the scene; to obtain from his old friend some information; but the vivacious joy of the poet had nearly overthrown all his plans.—"Sacred Powers!" he exclaimed, in return to the youth's graceful recognition, "do I behold—"

"Hush!" whispered the stranger, placing on the lips of the bard a hand sparkling with rings, the memorials of friendship from the fair, or the illustrious; "thou beholdest only Cadet le Perle, and learn silently to respect his new title."

"Well, monseigneur le Perle des Cadets, since thus it is your pleasure to be styled—"

"Call me Henri: you know, Aimer, it is no deceit; I am a younger brother of my house."

"Of your illustri—But to see you here! Good faith, it is passing strange!" and the poet looked cautiously around:

"Henri

"Henri le Téméraire. I must needs call you, unfriended by enemies, thus."

"They are no longer so—they are my honest friends."

"Of recent date, and you have ventured, monseigneur—"

"We have read of a prince of the blood travelling in France, who, passing through a place of small importance, was addressed by a countryman, on the part of the lord of the manor, with a pompous harangue, beginning—

"Monsieur, monseigneur, mon maître—"

which his highness interrupted with the following laconic reply—"Je suis monseigneur, votre maître est monneur, et vous êtes un set."

Whether Henry felt inclined or not to apply the last clause of this uncourteous retort to the poet for persisting in the opposite impropriety, he certainly did try to lead the discourse into another channel.

Gradually approaching a subject that in a lively degree excited his curiosity, he

he remarked with animation upon the heroic self-devotion of the countess.

The poet gladly chimed in with his praises of the mistress of the house, adding—"Such being the sacrifices she has made to the good cause, is not this noble lady, my lord, the more admirable in so well ordering her affairs as to be able still to give such princely entertainment as we this night have witnessed?"

To this the cadet assented; but his commendations not being so warm as Chastelar desired, he eagerly inquired—"How liked you the 'Welcoming,' my lord? Methought there was unwonted fire in the strain rung out as the duke entered the hall with his chivalry."

"It was exquisite!" returned Henry; "doubtless the countess retains some cunning musicians from Italy, the land of song."

"There be truly some singers among them, indifferently well skilled in melody," resumed the bard, rather impatiently; "but

"But I would especially call your attention to the words : the words—the words, my lord, are to the unmeaning notes what the vivifying soul is to the inert and lifeless body."

"The words, so help me," replied the cadet, "I was overmuch busied with the surrounding objects to give ear to."

"Not mark the words?" vociferated the angry bard; "then, by my troth, your lordship lost the noblest lay—full of the most delectable conceits and quaint devices that have ever been proclaimed since the days of the divine Ronsard!"

"I nothing doubt my loss," answered Henry, who now comprehended at a glance the resentment of the vain and irritable poet; "yon lovely stars—yon living lustres," looking towards the ladies, "must answer for it, as they must for all our sins: and, talking of sins, what guilt weighs on your lovely countess, who makes proselytes of whosoever she wills, and whichever way she turns?"

"Lovely

"Lovely she is," replied the pacified poet; "lovely, and wise as fair; one cloud alone obscures the bright perfection, and mars the gift of Heaven: party and politics engross her every thought; and to win an adherent from the cause of Guise, or of Navarre, to that of the king of France, she would permit one of those fair fingers to be severed from the beautiful hand you have worshipped. . . . Bright eye-beams, largess, smiles and promises, are all employed to that effect. . . . Meanwhile she neglects the divine muse, to whom she scarcely affords now and then a half-hour, grudgingly given. Yet why need policy and poesy be ever divided? As that much-misrepresented monarch, Charles the Ninth, was wont to say to his honoured Ronsard—

L'art de faire des vers dût-on s'en indigner
Doit être à plus haut prix que celui de regner,
Tous deux également nous portons des couronnes,
Mais, roi, je les reçois, poète, tu les donnes."

There

There was a brilliant moment! well was it worth a life to see that day; and if a king could thus honour a poet, surely a countess—

“Now Heaven help thy head for a conceited and incorrigible old coxcomb,” thought the ardent and impatient Henry; but, recollecting that the unfortunate Charles the Ninth had bound the minstrel of St. Remey to him by a few of those graceful words so precious from the lips of princes, he ceased to wonder at a devotion that death sanctified, and rescued from the imputation of servility. He recollected also, that the same ardour of imagination which identifies the bard with the very genius of independence, if once smitten with her charms, renders him, if first struck, on the contrary, by the splendours and magnificence of greatness, one of the most devoted, and at the same time most disinterested votaries of thrones, dominations, principedoms, and all the pomp and pride of life; without further comment
therefore

therefore he reverted to the countess. —“ To look at that flower-embroidered robe, and those light, luxuriant tresses, arranged beneath a lilled coronal, one would call the lady of St. Remey the personification of female loyalty in France; and yet there is something in those shining tresses, that fair and blooming complexion, and those bright blue eyes, that speak her of a different country?”

“ Nevertheless,” said the poet, “ the countess is a Frenchwoman in heart.”

“ In heart! Speak to the point, good seignor Troubadour.”

“ Mock not my calling, most powerful

“ A trade, Aimar,” said Henry, laughing; “ only tell me of this lovely countess—whence and who she is?”

“ To do so I must date her story from the present king’s accession. In his rapid flight from Poland, (oh, how every way unworthy of the successor of the much-misrepresented!) Charles, of merciful memory——”

“ Enough,

“Enough, Almon—proceed.” said the king.
 “The duke of Anjou, but one year nominated to the crown of Poland, and now called to that of France, passed through Vienna, where he was received with every honour by Maximilian the emperor.”

“In one of the festivals given to celebrate his arrival, a lady begged permission to present a petition to him. She was clad in deep mourning, and a veil entirely hid her features from his sight.—‘Justice, royal sir, justice!’ she exclaimed, casting herself at his feet: ‘by my mother’s side I am a subject of France. You behold, great king, in me an orphan descendant of the noble house of Montmorency.’—‘Justice on who?’ the astonished monarch said.—The lady more slowly replied.—‘On a usurper, a murderer, and a tyrant.’—The king entreated her to unveil, and to give him the story of her wrongs.—She answered that she had bound herself by a solemn vow not to take up her veil till after he had granted her the boon

soon she requested, and that the story of her wrongs was not of a nature to be revealed to any ear but his. In brief, the King heard her in private, pitied her, and though unable to redress wrongs that had not taken place under his jurisdiction, engaged his royal word to rescue her from future oppression, by permitting her to accompany him in his suite to France. During the journey she informed him of the reason of her vow—'Had I appeared unveiled before your majesty,' she said, 'envy might have reported that these poor features had influenced the determinations of your royal heart; and as reputation is the only good I still can call my own, sooner would I have remained the victim of the dark being my very soul abhors, than have given cause for such foul slander to fasten on my fame.'

"Noble lady!" exclaimed Henry; "and did the king's goodness never in the sequel, give food for false surmise?"

"Never—the life and actions of the countess

countess have been at once daring and irreproachable; and the king's admiration, partaking, as it does, more of the nature of esteem than love, has not as yet been wrested by malice to inflict a new wound upon her peace. The history of the lady Monimia (for such is her singular name) lies buried in the royal breast; but his zeal to secure her welfare shewed itself in open acts. So far he did wisely; but when he bestowed on this lady the lands and castle of St. Retmey, an ancient appanage of the house of Valois, he evinced that indiscriminate profusion by which the state will be ere long exhausted: and he would bitterly have repented this alienation of the crown lands, if the countess had not, in the hour of distress, shewn herself a French subject indeed, by paying back her monarch's lavish bounty in levies, in remittances, in the sacrifice of all her female vanities, to assist his cause."

"Noble lady!" again exclaimed Henry, who, an habitual admirer of the fair, felt his

his sympathy additionally excited by this union of virtues united to personal attractions.

"In what a frail bark," in a lower tone, added the stranger, "is thy all of safety ventured! But it matters not—though all beside should perish, she must and shall be saved!"

The minstrel heard not this short internal colloquy; and the crowd pressed forward to the banqueting-hall.

As the duke de Joyeuse approached the entrance, he involuntarily fell back a step, on observing his distinguished-looking companion near him; the proud and gay Joyeuse, the favourite of kings, seemed to hesitate with timid respect before Cadet le Perle.

This action was checked by Henry—"Nay, pass, Joyeuse," he whispered, in a tone between concession and command.

The duke entered the hall, and took his station at the right hand of the countess,

tess, while she motioned Cadet le Perle to
a seat on her left.

The duke de Joyeuse was at that time
"a courtier high and happy." Among the
first in the favour of his king, he pos-
sessed all those brilliant and attractive
qualities the superficial monarch valued.
He was elegant in person, witty, gene-
rous, magnificent, and brave; his animated
complexion gave added beauty to a coun-
tenance naturally sweet, open, and gra-
tious. In his quick glance and smile there
dwelt that gay hilarity which bids defi-
ance alike to care or to misfortune; it
seemed as if they could never reach him;
and that on whatever head the thunder-
cloud might burst, it would spare the
handsome and happy Joyeuse.

More calculated to inspire a deep and
lasting interest, yet as different from the
duke as darkness is from light, sat by his
side his brother, Henri de Joyeuse. Far
handsomer, yet less striking than the duke,
he would have been every where distin-
guished

guished for a countenance "with less of earth in it than heaven;" a countenance that revealed the eventful history of his fate—that told of struggles past—of more agonizing ones yet to come. His eye spoke of glory, genius, and deeds of high enterprise; yet there was an occasional look that announced even more than these—that told of a soul which earthly joys could never satisfy, and which struggled to pierce the darkness of sense, and break through the toils of worldly pleasures, to fix itself for ever where the only true good was to be found. The dress of Henri de Joyeuse was in unison with his character—it was plain and unadorned; and a black enamelled cross, richly set in gold, was the only ornament he wore above his surcoat.

The banqueting-hall was fitted up in a lighter and more ornamental style even than the ball-room; it was adorned with statues of exquisite workmanship, in the Italian taste; while the most delicious perfumes were exhaled from vases of agate
and

and alabaster placed around. At the banquet, the roses of pleasure were mingled with the lilies of loyalty; and the sword, the shield, and hostile banner, might literally be said to be buried in flowers. The ladies exerted all their bewitching arts of pleasing. Compliment and sprightliness furnished the chief part of the conversation, intermixed with political allusions upon subjects to which these fair dames were no strangers. Questions of state and war were discussed in the midst of gaiety and smiles; and the pledge went round to many a dimpled cheek, and many a sparkling eye, whose rays inspired the vow, and lent added lustre to the scene—a scene, the attractions of which were softened, not extinguished, by the now-and-then intrusive thought, that this, though a splendid, was a parting festival; and then a sigh for the fate that might overtake each heroic guest on the morrow, blended with the pleasures enjoyed with him on this gay and brilliant eve.

The conversation of the duke de Joyeuse was chiefly addressed to the countess, whom he entertained with the latest tidings of what was passing at court. Rival favourites came in for a share in the gallant courtier's descriptions, and a few sarcastic remarks were hazarded against the superiority assumed by the virtuous Dugast, and the magnificence displayed by the dazzling d'Epemon. He told of a tournament at which the king had jousted with success—a religious procession which he had conducted through the streets of Paris—and a masquerade, at which he had danced in the character of Hyppolita, queen of the Amazons—evolutions which Henry the Third performed with equal ease and self-satisfaction, and in which it was impossible to make him perceive either inconsistency or degradation.

During this discourse the eyes of the gallant duke were scarcely ever removed from the features of the countess, who found it, therefore, difficult to bestow on
his

his interesting neighbour the degree of notice she desired. She however did not let the banquet pass off without shewing him some delicate and marked attentions, and took an opportunity of inquiring of him the reasons that had induced the court to such a sudden change of plan respecting their late ally, the king of Navarre. The countess expressed her esteem for the character of that enterprising monarch, though gratitude and inclination alike bound her to the cause of Henry the Third.

The stranger's looks expressed dissent.—“If you knew Henry of Navarre as well as I do, lady,” he replied, “you would add a few dark tints to the picture.”

All eyes were turned upon the fearless accuser of one of the most shining characters of the age.

Cadet le Perle resumed—“I have made a vow—which may Heaven so help me as I keep it!—to encounter and subdue the haughty spirit of Henry of Navarre.”

“By my faith,” said Joyeuse, “I esteem Henry a gallant knight! and durst we question the orders which we live but to obey, would rather break a lance with him in gallant tourney, than pursue him to the death in actual fight.”

“Duke de Joyeuse, do you repent being to join the League?” asked the cadet, with a peculiar emphasis and a penetrating glance.

The duke, with some embarrassment, was preparing to disclaim the inference, when the countess, who saw that the discussions had somewhat changed their pleasant and amicable character, though she could not exactly trace the cause whence the alteration arose, with her wonted dexterity prevented the continuance of further discussions, by calling on the musicians for a song.

During the latter end of the repast, the countess observed that the eyes of the duke de Joyeuse were involuntarily directed towards an alcove, that seemed designed

signed to be ornamented with several statues, but in which only one remained.—“Duke de Joyeuse, you perceive what in yon recess is wanting,” she said with a smile, “and I trust you will applaud the cause of the deficiency; yonder small silver statue (it was that of a faun playing upon pipes) is all that remains to me of six, the boasted workmanship of Cellini; let me complete the sacrifice, if sacrifice it can be deemed, to devote the shining metal that composes them to the service of my prince.”

She spoke, and immediately motioned to two pages to give the silver statue in charge to some of the attendants of the duke.

The two Joyeuses gazed on her beautiful features, irradiated by the glow of enthusiastic loyalty, with impassioned admiration.—“Great and exalted lady! give us but a few more hearts like yours,” exclaimed the duke, “and France, rich in such a treasure, may defy the united
c 3 world!

world! Thus, at your feet, let us take the oath that binds us to defend you in every strait, with service, life, and fortune."

The knights of Joyeuse's train, as by a consentaneous impulse, eagerly united in the vow elicited by the chivalrous feeling of the moment. But the eye of the countess vainly sought the only one among them who had inspired her with a degree of curiosity and interest.

Cadet le Perle stood disdainful and aloof, as if he either despised or disapproved of the passing scene.

The fatal hour of parting now drew nigh; it was an hour the solemnity of which was, in secret, felt and acknowledged by all.

The morrow, with its dread uncertainties, arose upon each prophetic mind: the countess had bidden her gracious farewell to all. Gay and gallant to the last, the duke told her to prepare for trophies from the field; but Henry de Joyeuse, as he bent over the fair hand she extended
to

to him, only whispered, with emphatic earnestness—"Farewell, noble lady! pray for us."

The last that lingered was Cadet le Perle. The countess, believing all the guests departed, did not immediately herself retire to rest, but remained upon a seat, given up to lonely and painful musings. The sound of returning footsteps first roused her from her trance; she raised her tearful eyes to the rays shed by a silver lamp above her canopied head; they disclosed to her the advancing figure of Cadet le Perle.

Before she could give utterance to her surprise and terror, he had dropped on one knee, and raised the hem of her robe to his lips; then looking up with respectful tenderness—"Can you forgive," he said, "an obscure and nameless stranger, whose heart longs to thank your hospitality, when his incense may not be mingled with the venal noise and flattery of crowds? Oh yes! by that dawning smile

I see I *am* forgiven." As he spoke, he again caught hold of her robe, to prevent her departure. Gazing with still more tenderness upon her altered countenance—"Lady, you weep," he said; "can the idol of contending parties feel a sorrow? surrounded by luxury and homage, can Monimia know a fear?" He then added, in a lower tone—"Can the countess of St. Remey ever have experienced what it is to want a friend?"

The lady continued silent from extreme surprise; this stranger seemed to read her inmost soul. He now took her hand, and pressed it with the serious earnestness of one who wishes to enforce attention, and then rapidly continued, in a low, emphatic tone—"If so, seek not *that* friend amid the gaudy crowd of flatterers; those whose homage was offered to you this night already tremble on the brink of a precipice that is ready to give way beneath their feet—this moment the banners of France and Lorraine seem entwined in
indissoluble

indissoluble union; but treachery again may disunite them; and if so, no human power can prevent the star of Valois from growing pale beneath the Guise's happier ascendant. When that fated moment arrives," continued Henry, looking with anxious pity upon the lovely partisan, "remember this brief interview; shew this pearl to any member of the house of Lorraine, and he will acknowledge the token; then, let whichever side prevail, no scathe shall reach the castle of St. Remey!"

Struck with these alarming communications, the countess suffered him to detach the superb pearl from his mantle, and to fasten it to her sleeve. She longed to know if he was acquainted with her history, and still more ardently desired to be let into his own; but he hastily withdrew, after this brief and mysterious warning.

"Bold and amazing man!" her lips were ready to exclaim; and however she

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needed repose, she was unable to obtain it, from the fatal presages that crowded upon her mind of evil to herself and to the state.

CHAP.

CHAPTER II.
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The storm that howls around the mountain's head

Scathes not the valley.

WINTER.

THE factions that distracted France in the reign of Henry the Third, took their colour, in a great measure, from the character of the sovereign. Disappointing the bright promise that he gave in his youth, as duke of Anjou, Henry was fast becoming an object of contempt, both to his enemies and friends—alternately the weak slave of pleasure or of superstition. The conduct of Henry, from his accession to the throne of France, presented one unbroken series of error, misfortune, and degradation. His only surviving brother, the duke of Alençon, driven by the most offensive and injurious suspicions



from his side, openly espoused the party of his enemies. Implicitly swayed by the evil counsels of his mother, Catherine de Medicis, who, though she always affected the character of a mediatrix, only existed in discord and confusion, Henry next alienated from himself his brother-in-law and namesake, Henry of Navarre, who, from the time of his marriage with the king's sister, Margaret of Valois, had resided at the court. Placing himself at the head of the Protestant party in France, Henry of Navarre, united to his cousin, the prince of Condé, and the duke d'Alençon, the king's brother, presented a formidable strength in opposition to his power.

It was then this unfortunate monarch, unable alone to support the dignity of the crown, in endeavouring to secure to it a more efficient rampart, threw himself into the arms of his most dangerous enemies. The famous combination, known in France by the name of The League, was begun under

under pretence of defending the Roman Catholic religion, endangered by the increasing strength of the Protestants.

While Henry the Third, by his weakness, his inconsistencies, and frivolity, was every day proving himself less and less worthy of the crown, the duke of Guise, surnamed *Le Balafre*, the most magnificent, enterprising, and captivating of princes, was making rapid advances in the favour of the people. The duke of Guise, according to the French historian's noble expression, "*avoit un cœur de roi*;" but this royal heart was more bent upon personal aggrandizement than the welfare of the subject. He was the chief organ and support of the new faction; and to prevent his becoming all-powerful through its means, the wretched monarch found no other resource than declaring himself the head of the "Holy League;" and thus, from the king of his whole people, dwindling into the tyrant of a few.

The bloody councils in which the spirit  
of

of Catherine de Medicis presided, persuaded the king there was no safety for himself, but in commencing a cruel war against the Hugonots. Under their noble leaders, the king of Navarre and the prince of Condé, these persecuted people defended themselves with all the spirit and resolution inspired by the consciousness of fighting in a just cause—a cause in which they only demanded the free exercise of their religion, and the possession of such places of strength as might afford them a pledge for the performance of the promises made to them by the court.

It was against the far-famed policy of Catherine de Medicis to allow any party of the state to obtain an undue ascendancy. During the nominal reigns of three successive kings, her sons, Francis the Second, Charles the Ninth, and Henry the Third, “divide and conquer,” had been the maxim by which she, in rendering herself necessary, had, in fact, directed with absolute power the complicated machine

chine of government; her influence was therefore in turn exerted to make peace with the king of Navarre.

Though the generous monarch had experienced from the court nothing but faithlessness and treachery, he was ever averse to the effusion of blood, and consented to lay down his arms.

The arts which Catherine practised were only an epitome of the system followed in France by women of all classes. To the deserved praise to which, as excelling in the virtues peculiar to their sex, they might justly have aspired, they preferred the dangerous honour of influencing public measures by their eloquence or their charms (in this affording a strong contrast to the conduct of the ladies of France since the restoration—a female politician or *intriguante*, being now, we trust, a thing unknown). To return to those far different days—amusement, of course, formed a leading feature, in a court where the ladies exercised undisputed sway; gaiety and

and pleasure flourished in the midst of civil wars and negotiations; and the articles of a treaty were often sketched out, or the taking of a town was planned and executed, on the night of a masquerade or a ball.

"*Il falloit*," says the frank soldier, marshal de Monluc, "*quelque affairé qu'il y eût que le bal marchât toujours*." Wherever the two courts met (those of the queen mother and the king of Navarre), a truce was accorded to the interest of their mutual pleasures. Hunting parties diversified their amusements, and the king of Navarre appeared one day in the character of the dangerous enemy; and the next in that of the gallant and cheerful host.

A long interval of tranquillity being in nowise to Catherine's taste, war was again declared between the contending parties—a war almost entirely brought about by the intrigues of the queen mother, and her daughter, the beautiful Marguerite de Valois. Gallantry presided in the councils;  
and

and so much were the motives of the warriors, on both sides, acknowledged to be influenced by the representations of beauty, that the public did not hesitate to give it the name of "*la guerre des amoureux*." A new peace was concluded, with the same lightness with which the parties had entered into war.

Upon his accession to the throne of France, Henry the Third had espoused Louise of Lorraine, a near relation of the duke of Guise, and daughter of the count de Vaudemont. Having no children by this marriage, the alliance had only served to add a new lustre to the house of Guise, and to increase the ambitious hopes of the accomplished prince who was its representative. The death of the duke d'Alençon, who had never married, left the succession to be disputed between that aspiring family and Henry of Navarre, the rightful heir.

Nothing less than the crown itself would now satisfy the increasing ambition

tion of the duke of Guise. Still, aware that the princes of the blood stood between him and this desired object, he covered his inordinate desire of self-aggrandizement with the pretext of supporting the interest of the aged cardinal of Bourbon, uncle of Henry of Navarre, being younger brother to Anthony of Bourbon, the father of that prince; thus Henry of Navarre, as descended from the elder branch, stood indubitably first in the order of succession; but the Leaguers pretended that his religion was an insuperable bar to the throne.

At the same time, the duke of Guise spared no pains to render the reigning monarch contemptible. His profusion, his favouritism, and unparalleled frivolity and inconsistency, rendered this but too easy an undertaking. At length certain theologians, in the interest of the duke of Guise, ventured to maintain the lawfulness of deposing a monarch who neglects his duty to his people—"that the power  
which

which is exercised for their advantage alone comes from God; and that it is as absurd to give the name of king to one who knows not how to govern, as to assert that a blind man can perform the office of a guide, or that a senseless statue can command living men."

The duke of Guise, determined not to suffer the effervescence of popular feeling produced by such doctrines to subside, proceeded to join actions to words. Assembling together all the adherents to his cause, he openly commenced hostilities, as well against the reigning monarch as against Henry of Navarre, with whom Henry the Third was then at peace.

It was impossible for the king of France longer to remain an inactive spectator of conduct that had for its object the destruction of his person, and the usurpation of his crown. Now it was that he had reason to congratulate himself upon being at peace with Henry, king of Navarre. Certain that the generous monarch;  
forgetful



forgetful of all former causes of complaint, would really unite with him to crush the common enemy, he dispatched the duke de Joyeuse, his favourite, into Normandy, to oppose the duke d'Elbeuf, of the family of Guise, who commanded the forces of the League in that province. Joyeuse was received with every demonstration of friendship by the king of Navarre's most confidential agent, the baron de Rosny; and these warriors proceeded together to oppose the enemy of both princes, certain of the assistance and cooperation of the king of Navarre.

While such was the aspect of affairs, how amazing—how scarcely-credible is the pitiable inconsistency by which the miserable Henry the Third, influenced by the interested counsels of the queen mother, was induced to sign a hasty and disadvantageous peace with his worst enemies, the Guises, and to turn the whole force of his arms against the pride and support of his throne, his natural heir and successor—  
his

his late friend and ally—Henry of Navarre!

Our history commences at this juncture, with the thoughtless joy occasioned in the royalist party by the treaty of Nemours. Hollow truce! under which lurked unsuspected all the embers of future discord. Unaccustomed to question the commands of his sovereign, the duke de Joyeuse believed that this junction rendered him invincible, and confidently looked forward to the total discomfiture of the king of Navarre. With such hopes, and spirits animated to the desire of a speedy engagement, he quitted, with his splendid bands, the castle of St. Remey. But such was far from being Henry's policy; the exhausted state of his resources allowed him no chance of safety, but in postponing the engagement for which Joyeuse and his adventurous troops so eagerly panted.

Nothing, as it is described by the historians of the times, could equal the distress of the gallant king of Navarre, upon this unparalleled treachery on the part of his

his royal kinsman. Almost destitute of troops, without money and without allies, he saw three powerful armies marching in full array against him : those of the dukes of Joyeuse and Mayenne advanced upon him by forced marches, while that of the *maréchal de Matignon* already threatened him in front. But Providence, who watched over the safety of the hero who was destined, as Henry the Fourth, to be one day the glory and delight of France, enabled Henry of Navarre to elude all these great and pressing dangers. By the incessant exertion of skill and prudence, he avoided an encounter with any of the hostile armies ; and throwing himself into La Rochelle, determined to wait there till more favourable times might enable him to meet his enemies upon equal ground. Of all the heroes of Joyeuse's train, none were more disappointed at this termination, than he who had volunteered in the cause—than the young, the adventurous Cadet le Perle ; and seeing  
no

no further opportunity of reaping glory from this junction, he hastily abandoned it in disgust, and resolved to revisit the place of his birth—Lorraine.

### CHAPTER III.

Sure if our fates hang on some hidden power,  
 And take their colour from the natal hour,  
 My *sister* ! the same planet on us rose ;  
 Such the strong sympathies our lives disclose.  
 Thou knowest how soon we felt this influence bland,  
 And sought the brook and coppice hand in hand ;  
 And when the day was done, retir'd to rest,  
 Sleep on our eyes, and sunshine in our breast.

GIFFORD.

WHILE France was thus the theatre in which rival princes played at their bloody game of war, was there no spot on earth on which peace extended her dovelike wings ? no sweet retirement in which the language of love, not the jargon of gallantry, might be heard with sensibility and answered with truth ?

Not far distant from Varennes, and  
 about

about seven leagues from Verdun, lay a little valley in Lorraine, the inhabitants of which held their rights by a singular charter. Peace and industry smiled on the valley, which presented the unusual spectacle of a community of nobles supporting themselves by employments, that in other places devolve upon those born in an humbler sphere. A queen had granted them the statute by which they claimed the monopoly upon which they depended for subsistence; and, in memory of queen Blanche, their benefactress, the fair daughters of the valley usually received in baptism the royal name of Blanche, or the pastoral one of Rose.

Retirement, peace, and health, rendered beauty a very usual dowry with the maidens of the valley; but among all the lovely and noble Roses and Blanches, who shone, though destitute of fortune, in the grace and dignified purity the inalienable property of high blood, the two

daughters of the sire de Chastelar were distinguished as the fairest and the best.

The sire de Chastelar, the owner of a small property in the valley of Lorraine, was brother to Aimar de Chastelar, the poet of St. Remey. A youth spent by the one in the profession of arms, and by the other in the service of the muses, did not prevent the tenderest affection from subsisting between the brothers.

It was now seventeen years since the sire de Chastelar, undeceived in those brilliant hopes that marked the morning of his career, had retired to end his days in his native valley; and hardly a year of that time had passed in which the minstrel of St. Remey had not stolen a few weeks from the court of France, or from the castle in Normandy, to devote to the society of his brother and his brother's young family.

This family consisted of his two daughters, Rose and Blanche—for the sire de Chastelar was a widower.

Whatever

Whatever Rose and Blanche might want in discretion and prudence, from the absence of female tuition, their manners lost nothing of charm from the singular education they received. Brought up by the united instructions of the courtly poet and old soldier, each brother had contributed to the formation of their minds; but still the poet, if he had a preference, inclined to bestow the greatest portion of his instructions upon the docile and attentive Rose, while the military man found a more ready, and, of course, a more favourite hearer in the high-souled and heroic Blanche.

“Well, brother, the little rosy-cheeked, auburn-haired cherub is yours,” the sire de Chastelar would say, as Rose sat lisping some newly-conned tale of wonder on the minstrel’s knee. “You may teach her all the secrets of your art—romance, villanelle, triolet, lai, virelai, rondeau, rondeau redouble! Make the girl a Provençal poetess, a very Clémence Isaure, or Clara



d'Andusa an' ye list, so you leave me my Blanche, who would rather learn from me a single page of true history, than all the strange, good-for-nothing fables you have collected together with so much pains."

Each brother, in fact, with the natural complacency of self-love, held but lightly the profession of the other, when put in comparison with his own. Had not heroes been essential to poetry, from the epic down to the simple song of war, the minstrel would not have been very sorry if the earth had been cleared of such noisy and engrossing personages; while Raoul de Chastelar considered poets as very superfluous ornaments to the social structure, had it not been that their lays serve to embalm and preserve the deeds of heroes; to which he was subsequently obliged to add the concession, that the tales of Aimar beguiled many a winter evening, that might have been otherwise spent in dozing over the well-piled hearth.

Meanwhile,

Meanwhile, ornament and utility went hand in hand in the education of Rose and Blanche de Chastelar; and when arrived at womanhood, their perfect beauty of form was set off by manners possessing that dignified loftiness, spirit, and energy, sometimes the result of an education conducted by men only, when those men, as in the case of Raoul and Aimar de Chastelar, unite elegance of mind to elevation of sentiment.

## CHAPTER IV.

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But her pleasant memorie
 Did not, with her presance, flee ;
 Love reveals each lovely grace,
 Her sweet manners, her fair face.

Lay of HENRI D'AUDELEY.

AN evening sun descending upon the valley of Lorraine illuminated the casements of a number of neat, scattered dwellings. The thick foliage of various fruit-trees rising between, marked that a spot of ground for cultivation was attached to each of these houses. Midway, about the centre of the valley, a huge pile arose, which sent forth volumes of smoke, while the busy air of the beings that from time to time issued from it, formed a contrast with the rural quietness denoted by every other object in the valley. A little rivulet,

let, closely hemmed in by two mossy banks, ran brawling and sparkling over its rocky bed, until it was lost in the darkness of a neighbouring coppice.

A wood, that seemed coeval with the valley, sheltered it on the east, and afforded a luxuriant canopy to two cavaliers, who had fastened their steeds to the furrowed trunks of the mossy and gigantic oaks, and who now paused, surveying with admiration this beautiful sunset.

The lofty and magnificent figure of the elder cavalier was set off by a countenance which, although pale, was most prepossessing. An air of habitual superiority sat on his brow, and on a set of features at once mild, regular, and commanding; and his fair complexion was accompanied by a profusion of fair hair, rich, silky, and waving. While he shaded his eyes from the intensity of the setting beams with a hand, the remarkable beauty of which lent the last distinctive grace to his memorable figure, the other was employed

in patting the neck of his steed, a gallant iron grey, who seemed conscious and proud of his notice, and worthy, by his own beauty and spirit, to be the companion of such a master.

The young man who accompanied the fair and superb cavalier, had a frank, gay, animated countenance, and a complexion embrowned by nature, as well as by military toil. If the elder involuntarily inspired the idea of exalted rank, the younger equally appeared formed to be the companion of a prince; the playful smile on his lip, and his dark animated eye, shewing him to be one who never left any occasion of mirth unimproved; and princes being, as we are assured by the chevalier de Boufflers, unlike their archetypes the immortal gods in this—that they prefer those who can amuse, to those who only can adore them.

“How lovely,” began the elder cavalier, “is every object in this sequestered spot! how indescribably sweet!—the very air
wafted

wafted towards us, as if laden with the balm of peace! It requires but the presence of some presiding nymph to make this valley indeed the vale of Tempé."

"And to make Cadet le Perle forget his duty to the dame de Sauves and the countess de St. Remey," returned the dark knight, laughing.

"Nay, Florestan," replied the fair knight, in whom my readers have now recognised Cadet le Perle, "to the dame de Sauves I owe no duty; a lady so lost to loyalty shall never say she holds Henry in her chains. As for your other hint, I understand it not."

"Not when the fair one herself holds the precious pledge—the priceless pearl fastened to her sleeve?"

A deep glow overspread the elder knight's fair countenance, but there was something of anger mixed in its expression.—"Explain this, Florestan," he hastily said; "you could not have overheard our colloquy in the banqueting-hall?"

"That banqueting-hall has a gallery, and *there* a friend might even act sentinel, securely shrouded in the gloom, if he feared aught of treachery or danger to the master he is bound to serve."

"And who bade you fear treachery or danger?" resumed Cadet le Perle, while a smile in acknowledgment for the attachment he had inspired struggled with a frown at this encroachment upon his free-will.

"Her attachment to the League dated from a day," replied Florestan, with serious emphasis.

"And you conceived me in my accustomed danger, from the snares of beauty too! Florestan, you will never learn to know your friend. Pity—the pity of a loyal chevalier for a fair and gifted woman, embarked in a perilous cause, prompted alone the interview I sought.—I trust her heart admitted no warmer sentiment," continued the knight, with a more thoughtful air.

"The

"The wish at least is charitable," returned Florestan.—"Hark! is this forest haunted? No mortal, sure, could breathe such witching sounds!—Hark to those notes again, as of two sweet voices mingling."

It was Rose and Blanche whom he heard, and the subject of their song was this pastoral picture of friendship in Tasso's *Aminta*.

"Congiunti eran gli alberghi

Ma più congiunti i cori :

Conforme era l'etate

Ma'l pensier più conforme."

"Italian!" exclaimed the fair knight, "Little did I think to hear such words at a distance from the court of Catherine de Medicis. By all the charms of beauty I will pursue and discover in their nests these hidden warblers!"

"Have a care!" gaily resumed Florestan. "If, as you just now suggested, these shades should be haunted, better, in

my poor judgment, were it to leave them undisturbed, whatever may be the nature of their inhabitants. If mortals, they may resent ; if divinities, they may punish our temerity."

"Mortal or divine, I have experienced too much indulgence," resumed the fair knight, with a proud, conscious smile, "to dread witch, devil, or fury, in these woods—so St. Denis for the adventure !"

"On then !" exclaimed the dark knight ; "wherever you lead perforce I follow you."

The direction afforded by the sound led them to an open glade, where, reclining together upon a rustic seat, formed of the fantastically-spreading root of an ancient beech, they beheld, for the first time, Rose and Blanche de Chastelar.

The attitude in which they presented themselves to the strangers' sight, formed a group in which grace lent her magic aid to illustrate the charm of youthful female friendship. The finely-rounded arm of Rose fondly encircled Blanche's waist, and her face

face was placed so near that of her sister, that her profuse ringlets of golden brown (rendered richer by the rays of the sun playing over the rugged trunks of the trees around them) fell over Blanche's beautiful downcast features, and gave her the appearance of possessing the same complexion and hair as her sister. This was an illusion that Rose often liked to repeat, and thus to create a resemblance nature had denied to their different styles of beauty.

The lips of Blanche were still parted in giving utterance to the melodious strain; but the perfect beauty of her profile never appeared to greater advantage than when singing. The advancing steps of strangers startled the fair musicians, and ere the two knights could approach, instinctive modesty had prompted them to rise, and make a hasty retreat towards the valley.

Though dazzled with their beauty, which far surpassed any thing that he had yet

yet ever met with, the simplicity of their attire, and the humble appearance of the scattered habitations around; led the lofty stranger into the natural, but erroneous supposition, that in these two lovely girls he beheld some of those rare sports of nature—those violets springing in her humblest paths, which bloom from time to time, as if to confound the pretensions of high-born beauty. The Italian stanza puzzled him, but this they might have learned from some itinerant minstrel of the south.

Actuated by these impressions, the two young knights disposed themselves to follow the fair damsels to their retreat, and it was not long before they had overtaken them. He whom we shall content ourselves for the present to call Florestan, was the first to congratulate himself on his good fortune, in an animated address to Rose, to whom he poured forth a volley of courtly compliment.

Cadet le Perle, perceiving real displeasure

sure pictured in her countenance, addressed himself to Blanche, in a somewhat different strain, and with a soft, insinuating air, besought her to forgive the apparent rudeness that had induced him and his companion to detain them.—“We are military wanderers,” he said, “who have mistaken the way to Varennes; and familiar as Lorraine is to me, never did chance conduct me to this lovely valley before.”

Though the looks and words of the cavalier were those of a suppliant, a certain conscious air of command betrayed that he was not used to entreat and be refused.

Displeasure at the confidence it announced struggled in the lofty Blanche with the prepossession his person and manners could not fail to excite.—“And we, sir knight,” the spirited girl replied, “are simple maidens, who know not the customs of life beyond this peaceful valley; but strange must they be indeed, if they permit young cavaliers to pursue to their retirement, and, unauthorized, to address
in

in language like that your friend has used, the daughter of a noble."

"Of a noble!" repeated the fair knight, falling back a step.

"Of a Glass noble," Blanche with simplicity replied.

"A Glass noble, lovely maid!" said the gay Florestan; "that is but a brittle foundation upon which to erect the fabric of nobility."

"Such is the title which they bear, notwithstanding," added Rose, "throughout the precincts of the Glass Valley."

"The Glass Valley!" resumed the fair knight, passionately. "Oh, worthy name for an enchanted retreat, inhabited by nymphs so enchanting! Happy am I to have achieved this adventure, and to——"

"It is not achieved yet, sir knight," archly resumed the laughing Rose. "To be a denizen of the Glass Valley, it is necessary to prove as many descents as a canon of Strasburgh, or a knight of Malta."

"Perhaps

"Perhaps that might be done," replied Henry.

"In that case," Rose continued, "and if a vacancy should occur, you might possibly be admitted to all our privileges."

"And what are those precious privileges?" demanded Cadet le Perle, eagerly.

Rose demurely replied—"The monopoly of blowing glass for all the neighbourhood around, and of toiling in yon vast pile from morning until sunset."

"Nay, this is too much!" said the cavalier, turning from his arch informant a few steps in anger. "To pursue commerce—to toil!—Henry is not fallen so low as to be the object of a rustic's mock!"

He was only aroused from this momentary fit of indignation by perceiving that Rose and Blanche had availed themselves of his discomfiture to trip away towards their beloved home in the valley.

His companion soon succeeded in recalling him to himself, and calmer reflection suggested to the haughty, but generous youth,

youth, that he had heard before of the existence of such a community as the maiden described*.

“ I will

* The community of “ *Gentilhommes Verriers*,” or “ Glass Noblemen,” of Lorraine, was described to the author by a friend, who had visited the valley, and seen them occupied in their glass manufactory, as still existing, but in miserably reduced circumstances. Some flattering privileges were annexed to the station of a *Gentilhomme Verrier*. Their sons were eligible to serve in the army, and their daughters to be educated at St. Cyr. The other circumstances relating to their statutes, mentioned in the text, are all equally true. As, however, pretensions to gentle blood, unsupported by wealth, are, perhaps, of all pretensions, the most likely to excite the ridicule of the coldhearted and *angelle*, the “ *Gentilhommes Verriers*” were long ago exposed to such attacks, as appears by the epigram of Théophile, who flourished in the reign of Louis the Thirteenth, on St. André, the son of a *Gentilhomme Verrier*, who imprudently boasted of his pure nobility.

“ Votre noblesse est mince,
Car ce n'est pas d'un prince
Daphnis, que vous sortez ;
Gentilhomme de verre,
Si vous tombez pas terre,
Adieu vos qualités.”

This epigram was afterwards applied to the count de Guerchy.

"I will think no more of her," said the princely stranger, abruptly, as he unfastened his steed.

"Right, think no more of her," returned the dark knight, "an insolent, presuming——"

"But it was not *she* that mocked me," resumed Cadet le Perle, "it was not the angel-faced girl with the step of a nymph."

"No, but they seem sisters, and both the daughters of some little *gentilâtre*, who is forced to call in commerce to the aid of his scanty means of existence."

"Nay," resumed the first knight, with earnestness, "cast not a scorn on gentle blood. I now remember hearing of the peculiar statute by which these nobles hold their privileges. Yet, to be played upon by a novice—by a girl; to be recommended to labour—to——"

"It certes was injurious treatment for *l'aimable vainqueur*—the favourite of princesses and queens; but consider—what she saw was Phoebus shorn of his beams."

"She

"She has seen me for the last time; yet that angel-faced girl—I would fain know who they are, Florestan."

"So, in good faith, would I."

"Why you were not struck too!" exclaimed the cadet, with a start; "you cannot surely so suddenly——"

"Not with the same object," answered Florestan. "*I* admired the arch damsel with the nut-brown hair, sunny smile, and complexion like a rose."

"The little *esprit follet*, who presumed to mock your friend—hey, Florestan? Well, I would not for this fair province it were the other."

"I supposed, chevalier, you were to think no more of her."

"Pshaw! preserve resentment against a woman!—besides, it was misplaced—I was the first offender, and *ought* to seek forgiveness. Oh, how becoming and beautiful was the scorn with which the fair and haughty one repulsed the ardour of my overbold suit!"

"Powerful

“ Powerful, I allow, my lord, the charm that *you* must find in the novelty of such demeanour—but how effect another interview ?”

“ You must devise some means, Florestan. Remember your master’s fate is in your hands. I shall die if I obtain not another glimpse of the nymph of the valley. The way to effect it unbetrayed I intrust to you ; to you, faithful follower, who have ever had the wit to extricate your master from those false steps, out of which, nevertheless, you have never had the prudence to keep yourself.”

“ Thank you, my lord, for thus magnifying my poor merits. Though the praise be somewhat questionable, I am nevertheless moved once more to serve you, and shall call my good wit in aid of the adventure.”

CHAPTER V.
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I seek myself, and am but myself's shadow,  
Have lost myself, and now am not so noble.

*The Pilgrim.*

HUMBLE and unvaried as was the life led by the sire de Chastelar, there was an occasional fire of speech, a momentary sparkle in his faded eye, that told of other times, and different wishes; and his ideas did not seem, like those of the other nobles, bounded within the precincts of the valley.

Although generally cheerful, it was evident that the past was not forgotten or unregretted by him—*that* past which he could be seldom brought to mention; and there were certain days in the year he might be said to have appointed as high solemnities

solemnities of grief. Two of these days were the anniversaries of the death of his wife, and that of the massacre of la Saint Barthélemi.

The first was spent in bitter yet tender agonies ; but the second was a day of more austere observance, and was passed by the sire de Chastelar in absolute solitude, and clothed in penitentiary sackcloth.

This severe penance, his reserve on the topics connected with it, and his evident former intercourse with the great and gay world, gave rise in the valley to surmises not to his advantage ; and, as it is found always easier to imagine a person guilty than unfortunate, the profound sadness of Chastelar on the fatal anniversary of la Saint Barthélemi, gave occasion for some of his sagacious neighbours to accuse him *d'y avoir trempé* ; and he was often suspected to be expiating, in the dread and sober period of reflection, his fatal participation in the madness of that hour. Yet whoever had considered, with the smallest attention,

attention, "the sweet look of goodness which sat upon his brow," would have immediately exonerated the veteran from the charge, and have concluded that remorse could have no share in his sorrows.

On one of those anniversaries the sire de Chastelar was praying in the adjacent chapel. In the deepest abstraction the mourner called on the souls of the departed, and on the Comforter of wo; and so deeply was he engaged in his devotions, that he perceived not the light footsteps of *one* duteous child, who had followed him.

"*Pardon, oh, mon maître!*" escaped the prostrate mourner's lips; then the name of his lost wife; and, lastly, that of Blanche herself was uttered with a heavier sigh.

But Rose was not mentioned in his orisons; and Blanche, for it was *she* who had ventured to follow him, was surprised at this omission of her sister's name. Softly she placed herself on her knees beside her father; her heart was too full for

utterance, but her sobs gave him notice of her presence.

Chastelar started, and looked at her with kindness, but with an expression of soul-felt grief.—“*You* here, *Blanche!*” he exclaimed; “I wanted not *that* penance to remind me of my only crime.”

“Dear father,” exclaimed the agitated girl, intimidated by his mysterious expressions, yet nerved again by filial affection—“I do not come as a spy or an intruder; but Rose—but I—my dearest father, Rose and I often use to talk over this sad anniversary, and we agreed that your health must be endangered by such long exposure to the chilling damp, and we disputed which should venture to—and in short——”

“Although Rose loved me well,” exclaimed Chastelar, interrupting her, “you alone had the courage to intrude upon the privacy, and hazard the displeasure, of a father for his good.—But it is meet, it is meet,” he continued in a lower voice,

"that this punishment also should await me."

"Oh, speak not—think not less of Rose than me!" said Blanche, while the tear of sisterly affection trembled in her eye, of an affection that bound her to Rose with the excess of twin-like sensibility; "but since I have the happiness not *greatly* to offend you, permit me, dearest father, to raise you from these cold stones. Ah, how feeble and stiff you feel already! You will suffer me, will you not, to lead you to the house?"

Soothed by her kind attention, the sire de Chastelar allowed her to conduct him from the chapel; but he spent the whole day in the most rigid seclusion, and on the morrow his countenance exhibited unequivocal vestiges of the mournful manner in which he had passed the night.

"I think," Rose observed to her beloved Blanche, "that as years come round, our father's sadness, instead of diminishing,

ing, increases; and much I dread, that in time it must quite weigh him down."

"You know," replied Blanche, "he mourns not only for our mother, but for the horrid massacre of St. Barthélemi, in which, although we are Catholics, perhaps he lost some valued friend."

"But do you believe it?" said Rose, inquiringly.

"Believe what?"

"That the massacre of St. Barthélemi ever happened?"

"Alas! Rose, how can it be doubted?"

"I cannot conceive how persons could destroy multitudes of their countrymen for holding a different faith from themselves."

"That is because, my dearest Rose, you turn away your eyes from the real truths of life, to your uncle's fabled tales of fancy and romance; but our father has not, like him, lived in an imaginary world, and we might learn those truths



from his wisdom which we are happily exempted from acquiring by experience."

"And for what use?" again inquired Rose; "is it not in that world from which we are shut out that our poor father learned to be miserable? He loves to talk of the brave officers he has known, and the battles he has fought in former times, and what does it avail, but to make the company and conversation of the *Gentilhommes Verriers* irksome to him? From my heart I wish he had something better than two simple girls like us to entertain him—those two cavaliers we saw in the valley for instance; it was pity, Blanche, you were so shy."

"Their address was over bold methought, and my first movement was to chide; yet, were the fair and princely-looking cavalier to return——It skills not thinking of it now," continued Blanche, hemming down a sigh; "still, for our father's sake, and for his alone, I wish he  
had

had overlooked my repulse, and revisited the valley."

"Right, Blanche, they were quite men of our father's stamp; they reminded me of two wandering knights of romance."

"Rather say, of two noble warriors of the armies of France or Navarre. Had they but applied to *him*, instead of presenting themselves so inopportunately before *us*, they might have been hospitably entertained, and have amused his evening hours with tales of battle."

"Yes, Blanche, they might have been here now; and when their battle-tales had been sufficiently discussed, have told *us* lays of lore and love; and my father is so fond of the society of old officers."—(Whether it was exactly such society as that of Florestan and Cadet le Perle is not quite certain.)

"How often," returned Blanche, "has he wished aloud for some former comrade, with whom to converse of the battles of Jarnac and Montcontour!"

"And La-Roche-la-Belle," interrupted Rose archly; "did you not remark how dexterously I parried that unmerciful charge of the duke of Anjou with the Catholic war-cry of La-Roche-la-Belle, by telling my father his bouillon was cooling?"

"He lives but in the past," observed the tender Blanche; "and we, who are blessed with sensibility to present enjoyment, should listen with complacence to his oft-repeated tales."

A short time had elapsed after this short conversation, and nothing further was heard respecting the strangers.

One gloomy evening, when storms had prematurely given a wintry aspect to the valley, Blanche imagined she heard, amid the elemental uproar, the voice of some one requesting admittance to their cot. "List!" she exclaimed to Rose; "it is sure some houseless wanderer."

The sounds were repeated, and roused the attention of the sire de Chastelat from his

his book.—“ Who calls ?” he loudly demanded.

“ One,” said a voice that thrilled to Blanche’s heart, “ who seeks here for his last hope in life.”

There was something double and mysterious in these words, but the accents could not be mistaken, and both the girls earnestly joined in entreating the sire de Chastelar to unbar the door to the distressed traveller, whoever he might be.

The prompt humanity of the sire de Chastelar had already induced him to rise, and take a light, and the next moment he ushered in two dripping travellers, so completely disguised by their accoutrements, that it was impossible to foresee who or what they might prove to be. The tallest of the two accepted an offered seat, into which he sunk, in an evident state of exhaustion. The other spoke for him, and in a few words demanded the sire de Chastelar’s hospitality. He promised to be more explicit before

long; and looking at the two fair girls, who seemed divided between fear, amazement, and compassion, hinted, it was their presence alone prevented his making a full avowal of the motives that threw him and his friend on the sire de Chastelar's kindness at an hour so unusual.

The taller stranger wore a black wrapping-cloak, fastened with a brilliant belt, and hat of black velvet, of the form which we now choose to denominate a "*Henri Quatre*," the magnificent plumage of which drooped heavily with the load of imbibed rain. His companion, with an officious air of habitual service, helped to disembarass him of these; and it was with more emotion than surprise that Blanche then beheld, emerging like the evening star from behind an ebon cloud, the radiant aspect and fair locks of the unknown knight of the valley.

While the knight wrung from those fair locks the wet that had diminished half their brightness, and approached the high-piled

piled hearth to reanimate his frozen limbs, she busied herself with preparatives for some cheering and cordial repast; at the same time that she conceived her temporary absence, and that of Rose, might enable the knights to explain their situation with greater freedom to the sire de Chastelar; but, notwithstanding this delicate scruple, she found the strangers, on her return, still engaged with the subject.—“An affair of honour?” the sire de Chastelar was saying with the accent of inquiry.

“An affair of honour,” returned the first knight, “in which love also has a share.” He sighed, and looked at Blanche.

“And you and your companion require the temporary shelter of the valley,” continued the sire de Chastelar, thoughtfully.

“I engaged with my friend’s second,” said Florestan, “and require an asylum equally with himself.”

“And this must last——”

“As long as the *wounded men* continue

in *danger*," resumed Florestan, in a low voice, and with a glance at the attractive daughters of the valley. "You know how severe the enactments are against duels."

A second glance from Cadet le Pèlle hinted to the nymphs of the valley these fabled wounds were only those their eyes had made. But this refinement Rose and Blanche were too innocent to comprehend.

The sire de Chastelar mused a moment, and then thus addressed them.—"Chevaliers, you have claimed my protection. For your own sakes I could have wished it had been that of some more powerful man; since however concealment, rather than luxury, is your object, you will doubtless not, for a short time, be nice about your lodging, and I think I can promise you one where you can be in full security."

"To what comfortless lair is this an introduction?" muttered Florestan.

Chastelar resumed—"We are a noble, but poor community, each inhabiting his separate

separate cottage, and unable to afford shelter to any beyond our immediate families: but a little way up the valley is a chapel, a private passage of which conducts to a subterranean cavern, where——”

A cold tremour seized upon Blanche as she looked at the fair knight, so uncere- moniously consigned by the sire de Chas- telar to a living tomb. What! should that noble head, which seemed formed only to be pillowed upon crimson and down—those princely limbs, made to re- cline upon gorgeous couches beneath silk- en canopies, be exposed to the unwhole- some damps of a mildewed vault, sur- rounded by contagious air, and stretched upon moss-grown stones! For the first time Blanche thought her father unfeeling. Not a moment was to be lost, for Cadet le Perle was closing with his unpromising proposal.

Rose and Blanche held a whispering consultation together, and at length Blanche said, while her face became co-



vered with a perfect mantle of blushes—  
 “ Father, Rose tells me there is no need of such an alternative. The sieur de Maisonseule, Gentilhomme Verrier, who lives nearest to us, has disliked his home ever since the death of his wife, and proposes setting out to-morrow for Verdun, to visit his sister.”

A gentle pressure from the hand of Cadet le Perle expressed his gratitude for this timely interference; and it was agreed, if the information of Rose and Blanche proved to be correct, that the two strangers should obtain permission from the sire de Maisonseule to take possession of his empty shell, till such time as he should find it convenient to return to the valley.

Morning broke while the travellers were discussing the remains of their hospitable meal; and accompanied by the sire de Chastelar, the two young men sallied forth to examine their destined habitation.

What was the delight experienced by our adventurers on finding this cottage  
 was

was next to that of the sire de Chastelar ! —“ We do not propose to be unprofitable burthens as long as we remain in your industrious valley,” said the fair knight ; “ no, my friend, we will comply with the statutes, and thus obtain a right to the freedom of the Glass Valley.”

“ I fear, sirs, you will soon weary out,” said Chastelar, vainly suppressing a sigh. “ Little does the glare of furnaces, or the bustle of workmen, please the eye accustomed to the well-trained soldier—the ear used to the pleasant hum of the camp, and the flash of the loud artillery.”

The young men perceived they had unwittingly raised a demon of painful reminiscence, which it would be out of their power to lay again. Pitying the veteran, whose sorrows they might one day become worthy to know and share, they, for the present, contented themselves with silent sympathy, and turned their attention towards the necessary preparations for becoming for a time the happy and voluntary denizens of the Glass Valley.

CHAP.

CHAPTER VI.  
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Love, inbitter'd with tears,

Suits but ill with my years,

Where sweets spring unmingled around ;

Ere my homage I pay,

Be the godhead more gay,

And his altars with violets crown'd.

Lord of the Manor.

THE chapel bell that announced the hour of seven, was become to Blanche a sound of the most delightful anticipation. Already had she learnt to prefer it to that of her lute, and would often, chiding the slow march of time, ascend to see if her calculation had not deceived her, and if the hour desired had not already struck. How delightful the measured sound of the clock, when every stroke it tells brings the hearer more near to the object of her constant wishes!

wishes! What music can hope to rival the sounds that announce to the expectant heart a promised happiness? None, for music is only a pleasure, and pleasures are but sought as substitutes for felicity.

To Blanche the hour of seven announced that all was rest and recreation in the valley, and that same hour would release her hero from his self-imposed task, his voluntary toil—for a hero disguised she felt persuaded he was; yet her innocence knew no fear, for it concealed from her the vast distance that fortune would, in the case of his being of illustrious birth, place between them; and she believed, perhaps justly believed, that her gentle blood, beauty, and love, entitled her to aspire to all.

Each cheerful home received its master in the valley; but where was the social hearth so cheerful as that where presided Blanche de Chastelar?

The moment she had reason to expect her father's return from inspecting the labours of the glass-house, she busied herself
along

away with fairy feet. Happy in herself—happy to see her father so—and happy in a new, and, till now, an unknown sentiment, that imparted life, warmth, and interest to her whole being, Blanche, formerly noted by her father and uncle to be grave and pensive compared to Rose, appeared on a sudden a transformed creature. The night passed over her on downy pinions—the morn awakened her with rosy smiles; but still her fondest hopes turned towards the evening's calm—that vesper hour which was to her the harbinger of love and happiness.

One evening *that* vesper hour had passed, and it brought not Henry nor her father. Blanche tried in vain to conceal her uneasiness; and Rose, though she rallied her, shared in every thing her sister felt.

The brilliant belt that fastened Henry's cloak lay on the table, where he had left it in forgetfulness the night before. That night had been passed, like all the preceding

ceding ones, in the sweet effusions of social intimacy and mutual pleasure. That night the little circle, so fortuitously brought together, seemed to feel that the cottage contained their world; for the travelled knowledge of Henry and Florestan—the wisdom and experience of the sire de Chastelar—and the developed talents of Rose and Blanche, united to the soft feelings that glowed in the breasts of the younger part of the group, made the hours they spent together a succession of the most varied and elevated enjoyments.

Blanche fixed her eyes upon the jewelled clasp—*that* clasp which reminded her so strongly of its owner, who, for the first time, was remiss. Forgetful of another's presence, she exclaimed aloud—"Half an hour later than his wonted time, and yet he does not come!"

"Reviendra-t-il ? se dit la jeune fille—

Pas ne viendra, respond la blanche fleur,"

said Rose, archly applying to Blanche

two

two lines of a ballad illustrative of a pastoral superstition in France, in consequence of which young maidens were wont to consult the white daisy, or *blanche Marguerite*, in similar cases of perplexity, and fancy they discovered, in the even or uneven number of its leaves, the solution to their doubts and fears.—“ Shall we consult *la fleur devineresse* for this recreant knight, Blanche?” Rose resumed; “ what says *l’oracle des champs**?”

But seeing that Blanche’s anxiety was not to be sported away, and that large tears

* “ Marguerite,” in French, meant a daisy—it also meant a pearl—it also was a woman’s name. The “ Marguerite” therefore, under its triple character of a lady, a flower, and a gem, was the object of the mysterious worship of the earliest Troubadours, and afforded innumerable opportunities for those plays upon words and conceits, which in every country are the delight of “poésie” in its infancy.

The “ *blanche Marguerite*” was also the subject of a popular superstition, in consequence of which the shepherdess who doubted whether her shepherd would be punctual to the hour, had nothing to do but carefully to pick off the petals of a daisy. If, after patient enumeration, the number proved uneven, he would come—if an even number presented itself, it is needless to declare the alternative,

tears stood in her eyes, ready to force their passage down her cheek, she tenderly embraced her, and said—" My dearest sister, can you forgive the momentary folly of your giddy sister, and is she worthy, after it, to offer a serious observation? Remember, my Blanche, these young men are strangers, not denizens of the valley ; accident has obliged them to seek an asylum among us, and in like manner a favourable turn in their fortune may take them away. Let them not, therefore, further occupy our thoughts. Henry too may have his troubles—a man who has put the life of another (though that other be an enemy) in danger, cannot possess that clear and quiet mind which we enjoy, who know no sin—no sorrow."

" No sin, it is true," cried Blanche ;
" but for sorrow—oh, fatal stranger !"

She threw herself, with a burst of tears, into her sister's arms, and for the first time became sensible of the pains attendant upon the passion she had so incautiously welcomed

welcomed to her breast. With anguish she now discovered that a sister's love was no longer sufficient for her peace, and that Henry alone possessed the power to raise or to appease the fond solitudes of her breast.

Rose waited till she was again calm, and then timidly said—"There is another thing I would urge—I fear he is above our degree."

"Fear it! why fear it?" asked Blanche, with a sudden flash of loftiness not unusual with her, and which made her sometimes look more like a queen than a daughter of the valley.

"There is a mystery about these strangers that I like not," continued Rose; "and besides, their rank is not equal."

"How know you that?" demanded Blanche.

"Nay, I feel assured of it: and yet the tokens by which I judged are trifles so slight and idle, that when I would catch and fix them, they ever seem to elude my
my

my grasp. First then, remember you, Blanche, one evening, that my father, Florestan, and Henry, stood grouped in the valley together, discussing some old tale of war, that we girls were deemed unworthy to listen to—Henry held in his hand one of his embroidered gloves, which he ever and anon shook backwards and forwards, as if thinking of some challenge he had formerly accepted; he dropped it; Florestan almost threw himself on the ground in his haste to pick it up, as if for Henry himself to stoop had been degradation in the extreme: Henry, on his part, received it, when presented by Florestan, with a smile, and a certain conscious air, that seemed to say—‘It is well—you have but done your duty.’ Next I remark, that in this valley, where all others are equal, Florestan always observes to Henry a certain deference, and never, by any chance, has he been the *first* to cross our humble threshold. Thirdly, one day when the heat was unusually great, and Henry threw
threw

threw himself, faint and exhausted, on a seat, did not Florestan approach to fan him with his cap, and with officious service present a glass of water to his lips?"

"These are great discoveries!" said Blanche, smiling at the little remonstrance of Rose, which she heard with a degree of patience and good humour, that afforded after all but an equivocal proof of the goodness of her temper—the slight pain occasioned by the prudential suggestions of her sister being overbalanced by the pleasure of hearing Henry's name repeated often, though it were only in the way of admonition and reproof.

"Surely, my dearest Blanche," resumed Rose, with increasing earnestness, "you must have sometimes reflected on the speedy probability of this separation?"

Blanche had not done so. Every day more and more attached to Henry, she had been voluntarily blind to the precarious tenure on which depended the continuance of an intercourse that constituted her

her sum of happiness. She relied upon the love of Henry (love so obvious in every word and action) for devising some expedient never to leave her; so intimately did she feel her existence entwined and bound up in his, that steadily to contemplate their separation she found to be impossible. She tried to disguise, even from her sister, the sharp pang that the bare suggestion of it inflicted upon her heart; and assuming an air of raillery, said—
 “But you forget, Rose, that when I lose my swain, you will lose *as* devoted a chevalier in the gay Florestan, whom you have just proved to be his shadow.”

“No, Blanche,” said Rose, with unusual steadiness, “the gay Florestan will never peril me. Thoughtless and heart-whole, we are both too merry for the little blind urchin to play his malicious pranks withal. We laugh and sing together, and together brave his power.”

“Together! perhaps it were safer to defy him singly,” replied Blanche: but

hers was a misplaced incredulity; she deemed Rose but a rash, romantic girl, and was not aware that the sentiment which had taken possession of her own heart, while it left that of her sister free, had produced an exchange of character between them, and that the romance of Rose, which was as yet only that of the imagination, was not so dangerous as her error, which was the romance of the heart.

The raillery that had passed between the sisters had, however, the good effect of restoring the spirits of Blanche to the degree of dignity and serenity, deprived of which she could not, without blushing, have met the scrutinizing eye of Henry, who now appeared with her father and Florestan, become an almost inseparable three. The sire was in the midst of one of his favourite old stories, which, as far as the girls could guess, might have been, after all, the cause, and the sole cause, of the delay which had occasioned in one of the ladies so much pain and speculation.

As

As soon as Rose caught the words—
“La-Roche-la-Belle,” she stole at Florestan a glance so irresistibly comic, that the young cavalier was in an instant at her side, attracted by that arch glance and rosy smile.

This exuberance of spirits in her sister, Blanche, in her days of prudence, had vainly tried to check, justly assuring her that a jest, or a secret shared, was one of the greatest encouragements she could give to a vain and assuming man. But Rose, proud in conscious security, had neglected the admonition; though, beyond this occasional smile, for which she instantly reproached herself, she had never suffered her spirits to hurry her farther than the bounds of duty permitted; and the sprightliness in which she indulged with Florestan was of the most blameless and innocent nature. There certainly was an uncommon congeniality in the mirthful temperament of this animated and youthful pair, who, when together, seemed

like two birds, provoking each to outdo the other in lively and varied song. Of Florestan's heart it might be said, like Malcolm Græme's,

"It danc'd as lightome in his breast,
As play'd the feather on his crest *."

No care seemed ever to have crossed that sunny brow; and his dark eye and animated complexion flashed and glowed in unison with every rapid impression made by social pleasure. Sometimes, after having indulged in a thousand playful sallies herself, Rose would call her companion to order. Then Florestan found, or affected to find, the greatest gratification in following the lead of the lively girl in
what

* There exists a casual, but striking resemblance between this couplet in the *Lady of the Lake*, and the concluding one of a compliment to an illustrious personage, introduced in an occasional epilogue to *The Tempest*, by general Burgoyne, written in the year 1789—

"While gayer passions, warm'd at Nature's breast,
Play o'er his youth—the feathers of his crest."

what she was pleased to term her more serious pursuits. She initiated him into all the metrical lore that Aimar her uncle had taught her, and her apt scholar was in a short time so deep in the mysteries of "Rime Kirielle," "Rime Batelée," "Chant Royal," and all the pedantries that filled up the dark interval before Taste and Malherbe effected a bloodless revolution in France, that he might, if suddenly dismissed from the service of his present master, have maintained himself respectably, by practising the minstrel art. On his appearing, with the sire de Chastelar, after their unusually prolonged absence, he had presented Rose with a bunch of the beautiful flowers that bore her name, culled in the valley, and now claimed the privilege of placing them on her auburn tresses.

"No, sir," said Rose, playfully; "you are not of age sufficiently advanced to have a right to nominate a *rosiere*."

"Then," said Florestan, passionately, "let me hang the chaplet on your cham-

her door, as the Provençal bard did, erst, in the bower of the beautiful Clairetta."

"I know not, among any of the Provençal lays I have heard," said Rose, "one more frequently repeated than that which alludes to the fondness of the nightingale for that flower: and it is again introduced in a story of the fair Clairetta, who appears to have been as unfortunate as fair."

"Where is the pleasure," feelingly asked Florestan, "of a passion that is not returned? I envy not the nightingale his beautiful insensible."

"Perhaps," said the maid of the valley, "you wrong the exquisite flower. Say, is not the perfume the soul of the rose?"

"Bewitching trifle! would I had been Aimar de Chastelar!"

Rose liked not the passionate expression that accompanied Florestan's words and looks; and whenever that was the case, she took refuge in her lute: she now, therefore, concealed her confusion, by bending over the strings; and when she had

had tuned them, sung the last Provençal
lay she had learned from Chastelar.

CLAIRETTA'S BOWER.

LAY OF THE PROVENÇAL POET.

Night shed her veil o'er fair Clairetta's bower,
And, steep'd in balm, each blossom sought repose,
When thus the nightingale address'd the flower
Clairetta cherish'd most—the lovely rose!
“Sleep'st thou, bright queen of flowers, at evening's close?
Or wilt thou listen to the plaintive tale,
For which my song in tenderer anguish flows?
Our mistress long her absent knight may wail,
This day in arms he fell, in yonder hostile vale.”
He ceas'd. The queen of orient charms replies—
“Say, shall the mourner bow her sorrowing head,
While swift-tongued Fame, unheeding of her sighs,
In loud report the fearful truth may spread?
No, sweet lamenters o'er the gallant dead,
Let us, when next she seeks this calm recess,
Whisper, in sighs, her hopes, her pleasures fled,
With gentlest touch awake her heart's distress,
So be her tears more soft, her duteous love not less.”

104 HENRY FOURTH OF FRANCE.

She spoke. A free consent was breath'd full soon,
Throughout the bower, from breeze, and plant, and
stream ;

When, lo ! conducted by the favouring moon,
Clairetta sought the well-known spot, to dream
Of scenes of bliss—her lover all her theme.

As yet unknowing of the gloom that hung
On all that late had smil'd with cheering beam ;
But from each sad surrounding object sprung,
Too soon the tale of wo they told without a tongue.

With dewy tears his head each flowret bent ;
More sadly sung the plaintive nightingale ;
The pitying stars a paler lustre lent ;
The rippling stream was heard with murmur'ing swell ;
E'en spirits seem'd amid the winds to dwell,
For zephyr gay now sent a hollow moan.
“What means,” Clairetta cried, “this mystic spell—
All nature clad in sadness not her own ?
Ah, sure, I know her voice—she speaks my hero gone !”

“And would Rose shed one tear the
more,” again whispered Florestan, “if her
lover

lover should fall in performing the duties of a knight?"

Happily Rose was saved the embarrassment of replying to this question, by the sire de Chastelar's resuming the subject of the battles of Jarnac and Montcontour, in which he, although a Roman Catholic, had served (like many other Catholic officers) in the army of Coligny. That distinguished chief, who might be styled the tutor in the art of war of Henry of Navarre, at first sought rather to rein in than to excite his ardour, and with this view had placed him, at the battle of Montcontour, on a hill at a small distance, with a *corps de reserve*.—"Never shall I forget that battle," exclaimed Chastelar, "where Henry of Navarre, then only sixteen years of age, gave the first promise of his glorious youth! I think I see him now, surveying the dispositions of Coligny, from the eminence where the admiral's cautious prudence had placed him. Scarcely could obedience to the orders of the commander

prevent that ardent spirit from overpassing its bounds, and rushing into the heat of the combat. In the brilliant impatience of his valour, you might see the rising struggles of the infant Hercules*; but when the battle raged fiercest, oh, how did his inborn sagacity put to the blush the experience of bearded men! He saw where we had failed, and exclaimed, in the anguish of his princely spirit—
 ‘ We follow not up our advantage—we lose the battle by our own folly!’ By how many glorious actions hath he since redeemed the enforced inactivity of that day! Oh, Henry, thou art in the pride of life, and I in its decline! yet, but that a long blight hath fallen on all my hopes, one blast of thy trumpet could even now rouse me, and summon me to thy side from the retirement of the valley.”

“ And I,” said the fair and mysterious stranger, whose name also was Henry,
 “ would

* Henry had taken for his device an armed Hercules, with the motto—“ *In via virtutis nulla est via.*”

"would gladly answer to the summons of Henry of Navarre; but it should be to mortal combat, in which one or both of us must fall; to meet him in hostile guise, whether at court or in the field—whether on his native soil or mine; and never will I resume the name I bore until——" He paused, conscious of having said too much.

Like many remarkably fair and handsome countenances, that of Cadet le Perle, when lighted up with anger, had in it something at once bright and terrible. He caught the dove-like eyes of Blanche fixed upon his face with an expression he alone could read aright. *Oh, intelletto d'amor!* controlling power, that had established between beings so dissimilar an intelligence so complete. Those large blue eyes, swimming in tears, seemed to say—"Henry, if aught could ever move thee to look thus at *me*, my trembling heart could not survive thine anger!"

That glance, so full of soul, while it

flattered his most cherished feelings, recalled him to himself; and anxious to prevent the minds of his hearers from dwelling on his late imprudence, he resumed his discourse, observing—"I thought, sire, de Chastelar, your attachment had been more particularly to the admiral than to the king of Navarre *."

"Assuredly," Chastelar replied. "I loved, and skulked in the dawn of the glorious Henry; but it was as a soldier of Coligny's I followed him to the field—followed him from attachment—pure, disinterested devotion, such as heroic qualities only can inspire. You young men, now-a-days, talk of choosing a leader from attachment; but *yours* is to riches and honours; the flame that animated numberless brave gentlemen in my younger days waxes feeble, or is extinct."

"Nay, I must break a lance with you, venerated sir, in favour of present times,"

resumed

* The illustrious Coligny was often simply designated by his title of "The Admiral."

resumed Henry; "there *are* men capable of following their master to exile and to death—are there not, Florestan?"

Florestan bowed assent, with a very peculiar expression of countenance.

"Men who would follow a chief, a—prince, we will say, from motives of pure affection, though interest point a different road—do they not, Florestan?"

"Most true," replied the dark knight; "but should that prince be ultimately fortunate, mark me, they look to sharing his good fortune."

"That is but just," resumed Henry, laughing.—"Sire de Chastelar, I fear we have left the field to you;" and he hastened to place himself by the side of Blanche, to smile away, with love's most bewitching flatteries, the transitory feeling of terror he had impressed upon her imagination.

Though the day was passed by Henry in assisting the sire de Chastelar to overlook his workmen, and direct the progress of their labours, he always kept himself in

Blanche's

Blanche's mind, by discovering some employment that should occupy her until the time of his return. Thus, versed in courts, and accomplished in every art of pleasing, he had made himself necessary to her happiness, even before she was aware that her heart was irrevocably engaged. In the course of their intimacy, Henry sometimes betrayed a degree of absence of mind, that contrasted strikingly with the polished dignity of his usual manner. While Blanche was repeating to him her progress in something he had wished her to learn, she paused on perceiving that Henry no longer attended to her, but, apparently unconscious of the observation of others, remained with his eyes intently fixed on her collarette. Her delicacy took the alarm, and she began adjusting it with more than usual care around her neck.

"Forgive me, lovely Blanche," said Henry, while a blush at her misconception diffused itself transparently through his glowing and clear complexion; "forgive

give me if I distressed you by a rude and lengthened gaze, and deign to reply to the question no vain curiosity prompts me to ask. That slight and small scar, how, ever trifling, on the left of your collerette, resembles one inflicted with the point of a sword—is it possible?”

He paused; but the agitation of Blanche at his extraordinary observation was excessive. A thousand horrible imaginings, and thoughts too deep to be communicated even to Rose, yet that had been sometimes indulged in secret, crossed her mind. She continued to look on Henry, her eyeballs strained, her lips apart, and every expression of a mind racked with the agony of doubt. At length she exclaimed—“ Whence comes this strange surmise?—oh, speak if you have aught to tell me!—this moment, in mercy speak!”

“ As I hope for heaven, I have nought to communicate,” said Henry, fervently; “ and had I thought that a question, asked in sincerity, would have thus alarmed
you,

you, sooner would I have stilled this heart in my bosom, than have attempted, at such an expence, the gratification of my curiosity."

He spoke with the openness of truth; and, as he uttered these words, pressed her hand with earnestness, to enforce the expression of his sorrow, for having unintentionally distressed her.

"It is well," cried Blanche, gradually recovering herself; "but your question fluttered my spirits strangely. What violence could ever have attacked my life—a daughter of this peaceful valley? Yet some vague and horrid recollection I have (nay, to a recollection it scarcely amounts); an impression which your words have singularly revived, of distress in childhood—swords glittering and waving above my infant head—and pale, ghastly faces, and voices crying for mercy—and of a lady —"

"We will think no more of it," said Henry. "Oh, how, my fair, is it possible
to

to think of aught ungenial when you are by? Blanche," continued he, impressively, "you have taught me the force and means of two phrases in our language with which I was till now imperfectly acquainted;—*lain de vous*, and *près de vous*; the first means misery—the second happiness."

With eagerness the guileless Blanche drank in these honied words, and suffered Henry to sooth the heart that his abrupt question had so disturbed. He turned the discourse to different themes, now seeking to interest, now only to amuse her mind. Yet still, whatever the subject thus discussed, the tenderness of his looks and tones made it of importance; those looks, which prolonged the expression of his feelings, even when his lips were silent—as in music, the chord that has been touched returns a vibration, long after the musician has ceased to elicit the sound.

"Exquisite creature!" cried Florestan, when his friend talked over with him the various events, or, rather, the various feelings

ings of this day. "It is well my master has marked her for his own, else, I begin to fear me, all the laughing graces of Rose could scarcely keep me from transferring my allegiance to this lovely lily. There is nothing in the most dazzling beauty so striking to my mind, as that complexion of purest fairness, those blue eyes of such heavenly expression; and when cast up in terror—oh, did you ever witness aught so lovely, so sublime?—and, touching upon terror, allow me to observe, that you frightened her most terribly to-night, chevalier; a few more such sallies, and that little heart may for ever escape you. How your spirits flash and kindle at the very name of Henry of Navarre! Her father, the old soldier, too, I marvel where his wits were, not to take instant alarm?"

"It is as thou sayest," said Henry, who had attended only to the first part of Florestan's harangue. "Sure something strange and mysterious surrounds the maid. Long have I marked that minute
scar—

scar—that complexion of clearest paleness, which I yet have seen streaked with the hue of the virgin rose—and then an occasional look of terror, which ever and anon impressed me with the notion that her cradle must have been rocked in storms, to have thus left their indelible impression on her pale but faultless lineaments.—What sayest thou, Florestan—is she not the daughter of Chastelar?”

“Nay, by my faith, our guesses do not prejudice her parentage. She may be Chastelar’s daughter, and yet her infancy may have been exposed to dangers. She cannot be much older than the massacre of la St. Barthélemi. But I see which way your imaginations tend. Supposing some mystery to envelope her birth, our plans would not deprive our kind host of a daughter.”

“Our plans! Talk not so lightly, sir,” said Henry, with a flash of anger. “Think you I harbour towards such an angel any plan inconsistent with honour?”

“I put

"I put it not in doubt; but something must be determined on, and that right speedily. Think you it well tell nobly for Cadet de Perle to remain buried, like Achilles in Scyros, in an obscure valley, while all France is in arms, and the glorious opportunity again presenting herself, which may never more return?"

"Explain yourself: of what opportunity do you speak?"

"My letters of this day inform me, that the negotiations for peace with the king of Navarre have failed as usual, and that Joyeuse is once more sent out to crush him, with an army composed of the best forces of the kingdom."

Cadet le Perle started as from a dream. —"Ha!—are you sure of that?"

Florestan replied—"I have my information from Philip. You, chevalier, are the best judge whether his authority carries weight with it or not."

Whoever might be this Philip, his communication produced the effect of electricity

city upon our youthful Alexander. Instinctively he grasped the hilt of his sword, and his whole expression at once announced the transformation from the lover to the hero.—“Enough!” he cried; “friend, companion, brother in arms! too long have you seen me bound in the flowery chains of Love—to-morrow we prepare for battle!”

Florestan paused and hesitated.—“But perhaps——”

“Perhaps what, sir?”

“The lovely Blanche de Chastelar may deserve even *that* sacrifice.”

“She would not ask it: her heroic bosom beats to the name of glory, or it would never have throbbed responsive to mine! But were it possible she should exact it, there is no sacrifice which her merit does not deserve. Blanche de Chastelar is worthy of a ducal diadem!”

CHAPTER VII.

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Oh, mark those smiling tears, that swell  
The open'd rose ! from heaven they fell,  
    And with the sunbeam blend ;  
Blest visitations from above :  
Such are the tender woes of love,  
    Fostering the heart they bend !    COLERIDGE.

THE evening that succeeded this conversation beheld Blanche de Chastelar and Cadet le Perle slowly pacing together the antique wood that sheltered the valley towards the east. It was seldom that Blanche ventured thither unaccompanied by Rose, and on this occasion Rose set out in search of her, with tidings that she felt certain would be joyfully received.

She paused as she approached the pair, and observed them from a little distance.

She

She remarked that Henry was speaking with earnestness—with energy, and that he pressed the hand of Blanche to his heart. To what he had been advancing Blanche made some reply, in which the loftiness of her native character was evidently expressed. The cadet took up the objection of Blanche (whatever it might be) with added vehemence and tenderness, and the numerous variations of his transparent complexion announced unequivocally the conflict in his mind. At length Rose thought she beheld him put a ring on Blanche's finger; but of this she could not be certain, for they turned at the moment from the direction in which she was observing them; and unwilling any longer to delay her good tidings, she hastened forward.

Eagerly taking the hand of Blanche, she exclaimed—"My dearest sister, it is two hours since my uncle Aimar has been in the valley, and my father is so happy! and he has brought us each presents from  
the

the great city—for you a little marygold-jewel and a cross of pearls; and to me, for that he knows how dearly I love minstrelsy, he has given a complete set of the ‘*Marguerites Françaises* \*.”

But a second before, Blanche de Chastelar had been listening with rapture to Henry’s honied vows; but now, with the versatility of girlhood, and the strong love of kindred, which ever marks the truly modest and affectionate female mind, she sprang forward in the direction to which Rose’s finger pointed, exclaiming—“My uncle—oh, my dear uncle, how I long to see you again!”

Rose’s intrusion had a very different effect upon Cadet le Perle, whose countenance was in an instant overspread with gloom, and he refused, with some bitterness,

\* Poems of Queen Marguerite de Valois, sister of Francis the First, entitled, according to the quibbling taste of the times, “*Marguerites Françaises*,” which might signify either “French Margarets,” or “French Daisies.”

ness, to return to the cottage with Rose and Blanche de Chastelar.

Happily for herself, Blanche was too much engrossed with a new object, and also too certain of Henry's love, to notice the alteration of his manner, as he excused himself from accompanying her. Seizing the arm of Rose, she darted down the valley, and was in a few minutes in the presence of the minstrel Chastelar.

She was received by the poet with cordial delight: with pride and pleasure he contemplated the improvement that, since his last absence, had taken place in her person and countenance. She had been ever mild and affectionate to him—lovely in her form as polished in her mind; but that unvaried paleness, that pensiveness, and stillness of manner, bordering upon melancholy, he, as well as Florestan, had often observed and deplored, and he was now delighted to see it had given place to joy-beaming eyes, and a countenance rosy and blushing as the glowing sunset.

Happiness had indeed fixed its abode in her heart, or rather, to speak more truly, had visited that heart in all its plenitude, to make her feel more deeply, in after times, all the darkness of deprivation. Whatever Fate reserved in store for her, the effect was, for the present moment, to develop all her charms; and Blanche replied to the poet's warm congratulations on her beauty, in a tumult of gratified feeling, to each of which, separately, she would have found it difficult to assign its just proportion of weight.

"Why, that is indeed my little Blanche!" cried Aymar de Chastelar; "I now know my own girl. I always told Rose to be ware of your native charms, if you once cast aside that pensive air which, pardon me, originated in your not devoting sufficient time to the diversions of music or the muse. I now see that Rose must have well cured you of your heresy, and shall bring you the 'Complete Treasury

surey of Parnassus: the next time I come, to complete the reformation."

"It is in vain, uncle, you bid me be ware of Blanche's charms and graces," said Rose, answering for her sister, for she pitied her confusion; "if Blanche had a hundred times more than she possesses, it would only make me the happier, I so love her."

"A hundred times more, pretty minion! and who told you that was possible?" said the poet, playfully taking up the golden rings of Rose's hair, and kindly stroking her head.—"By my faith, fitter are ye both to sparkle at the courts of France, or of Lorraine, than to be mewed in this obscure valley!"

"They are satisfied with their lot, brother," interposed the sire de Chastelar, "and it boots not trying, by vain discourse, to make them discontented. Little have you gained by your following the great."

"Little have I gained! Now, by my

minstrel faith, but that it were betraying my superiors, and rendering myself unworthy of trust, I could tell you such a tale of the cause of my present journey into Lorraine——”

Rose stole a conscious look at Blanche, and made her a sign to be silent, certain that, in that case, their uncle would speedily communicate his secret.

“Nay, brother, I had flattered myself that *we* might have some share in your journey,” resumed the sire de Chastelar good-humouredly; “it is now longer than you have been wont to be absent from us.”

“It is true,” returned the bard, “and the *care beate selve* never received a more affectionate heart than mine; but business—business, brother, has long kept me from the spot where I have treasured up my heart; and the queen mother—blessed be the name of her majesty!—has a just value for the muse, and knows that the men *she* favours are often also the most astute in matters of war and policy.”

“Then,

"Then, brother, she knows more than most folks. But how long is it since your poetship has turned politician?"

"I said not that I had become a politician, but simply that I was not disqualified to *be* one. My genius is now free and unfettered, for I am no longer in the service of the countess of St. Remey."

"No longer in her service!"

"No; the queen mother begged me of her at the conference of Saint Brix, it being the policy of that discerning princess to secure to herself the cooperation of all the talents, and all the wisdom, of which the nation can make boast."

"And to seduce the servant from his master, the soldier from his standard, and the poet from his patroness, by her lures and her largesses—is it not so, brother? and you have exchanged a chain of roses for a chain of gold! give you joy—give you joy! But prithee tell us next, with what commission of dark and crooked policy



licy has Catherine de Medicis dispatched you to Lorraine?"

"I tell you, brother, with none. Is it not strange that the world will buckle on my poor shoulders the dignity of confidant of a queen who confides in none? or if she did, sooner would I die——In short, my mission stops not at Lorraine, but obliges me to proceed as far as the Hartz country in Germany."

The poet paused, in hopes of being more closely questioned, and the sire de Chastelar was greatly determined not to gratify him.—"I doubt, Aimar," at length he said, with apparent simplicity, "it is to collect for her majesty, whose fine taste equals her other virtues, some specimens of those Troubadours of the North, the German Minnesingers?"

"Prithee spare thy conjectures, if thou canst conjecture nothing more to the purpose," returned the poet peevishly; "thou shalt get no gratification of thy outrageous curiosity from me. But thus much I think

think I may safely do, without committing my employers. I will shew thee the individual who is the object and end of my present journey."

Saying this, the poet took from his vest a portrait, carefully wrapped up, and putting it in his brother's hand, continued—"Look, Raoul, what would you predicate of that countenance?"

Chastelar gazed on the miniature—took it up—laid it down—returned to it—and seemed at once attracted and repelled by some sort of indescribable fascination.—"Nay, by my faith," said he at last, "so many lines are written in that countenance, some in so fair, some in so mysterious a character, that to decipher their hidden meaning surpasses my poor skill."

"I must call in the assistance of the girls then," resumed the poet; "and truly the lineaments are such as maidens mislike not to look upon."

Rose was the first that obeyed her uncle's call; and leaning over his shoulder,

beheld an image such as fancy, in her most romantic dreams, had never pictured; it was the portrait of a young man, in the military habit of a commander of German reiters: his mantle was of rich velvet, and the band falling from his neck in the guise of ermine, gave him the appearance of a proud and powerful baron; his attitude was at once graceful and meditative; he seemed absorbed either in reflection or grief—perhaps in both, for on his fine intellectual forehead genius, mingled with an expression of the profoundest melancholy, sat enthroned, and in his deep and thoughtful eye the stormier passions with softer thoughts seemed blended; his jet black hair curled into his neck in raven ringlets; and his features, in every line and turn, seemed moulded by the hand of love itself, so that imagination could add nothing to their exquisite and expressive beauty.

Rose gazed on the portrait as if attracted by some invisible power, till her eyes  
became

became dim with tears, and her breast heaved with involuntary sighs. It seemed to her a countenance that she had not beheld for the first time, but rather that it reminded her of some preconceived idea of perfection.

"Come, give a guess," said the minstrel, "to whom those mysterious features belong?"

"Nay," replied Chastelar, "I know not the favour of many of the German princes; for the elector palatine it is too young—it cannot surely be prince Casimir?"

"Prince it is none, though it be the resemblance of a man far richer and more powerful than many German princes. What you see is the likeness of Conrad, baron of Rammelsberg, more commonly known by the name of CONRAD THE WONDERFUL, THE BLACK BARON."

"Conrad the Wonderful!" repeated Rose, with a thrill of admiration and awe, for the titles Aimar had enumerated

roused all the spirit of romance in her composition; "and to what cause does the baron of Rammelsberg owe this most singular designation?"

"Singular, but not unexampled in Germany," returned the minstrel, gravely; "ye have all heard of Henry the Wonderful, lord of Grubenhagen. The title of the Black Baron was first given to lord Conrad's father, baron Rudiger, on account of his complexion, or on account of some strange things he did; for some say they are an evil race; but I believe it not, for the young baron is indeed wonderful in every thing—wonderful in genius—wonderful in power—wonderful in beauty—wonderful in riches, which he dispenses with the liberality of a prince."

"The true man for a poet to visit," observed Raoul de Chastelar.

"A better reason than his riches, brother, is, that lord Conrad is passionately devoted to the Muses, and is himself one of the first poets of Germany. Judge then how

how much more acceptable as a negotiator with him will be a professor of the divine art, than a dry politician; and much skill and cunning will it take to dive into his soul, and draw him to our side, for neither avarice can tempt, nor ambition allure him."

"A noble character, by my faith!" cried Raoul; "and which is the party in the state that he now espouses?"

"He has been, even from his youth," resumed the poet, "a zealous *religionnaire*. Marry, the history of lord Conrad would, if I had leisure and opportunity, furnish out an edifying and profitable romance. Ten years, they say, have scarcely run their course, since he was of all the Saxon nobles the flower and pride. But the race of Rammelsberg is said to have some malignant being attached to it; and the young baron returned from hunting in the Hartz forests a woful man from what he entered them. That day the Black Huntsman appeared to him in the

G 6

forest,

forest, to warn him that the sun would descend in blood; and ere the chase was over, lord Conrad's brother, a beautiful youth, was wounded unto death."

"That was a sad misfortune, good faith," interposed Raoul; "but not such as to blast the whole life of an active knight."

"So said the world," observed Chastelar, "after allowing a decent time for mourning; but lord Conrad recovered not the stroke, nor ever doffed his mourning habit.—His fate in love was said to be still more unblest.—Thus it was I was made acquainted with some particulars of his calamities: at the time that the king's brother, the duke d'Alençon, wearied out with the incessant insults of the favourites, made his escape from court, and joined the Hugonots, I was a poet well esteemed; but my poor brain being turned with our peerless Marguerite\*, who  
was

\* Marguerite de Valois, daughter of Henry the Second and Catherine de Medicis, and wife of Henry king of Navarre.

was most strongly attached to her brother Alençon, my love for that royal pearl led me to embrace the quarrel of the duke; and taking counsel of no man, I joined his flight, and thus for that time barred up all future chance of advancement for myself at court. The duke, God wot, was not so grateful for this proof of attachment as I could have wished, and was pleased to say that politics never throve when women and poets meddled in the cause: howbeit, as I was anxious to be employed, he trusted me in a certain mission to the prince of Condé, uncle of the king of Navarre, who was then in Germany, levying troops for the Protestant cause. The prince received me not a whit more graciously than the duke, which gave me occasion to repeat a remark that has often forced itself upon my mind, touching the different manner in which we ordinary men rate our attachment to the great, and that in which they return our love."

"Briefly, brother," interposed Chastellar,



lar, "you had, for the sake of the *dame de vos pensées*, a princess elevated beyond all calculation above you, run your head into a quarrel in which you had no manner of concern, and like the dog in the fable, renounced——"

"Even so," interrupted Aimar, who, although a poet, for once did not relish an illustration: "the prince received somewhat coldly my offers of life and service, told me he was not then at leisure to attend to me, but sent me on to the baron of Rammelsberg, with a recommendation that I should be courteously entreated as a retainer to the good cause, until such time as his highness himself should be able to confer with the baron, from whose assistance he expected much. The baron of Rammelsberg was then hunting in the Hartz country, where he had a magnificent chateau; and there, after a toilsome and most rugged journey, I first beheld CONRAD THE WONDERFUL. He had scarcely completed his twentieth year, and was the  
finest

finest and most gallant knight mine eyes ever beheld ; still his cheek had already the paleness, and his eye the melancholy, this picture represents. Nevertheless, at the castle of Rammelsberg, we lived as pleasantly as princes, until the real prince arrived. Left, by his father, the inheritor of immense riches, the young baron of Rammelsberg, who had wholly withdrawn himself to solitude, employed those riches in the encouragement of men of science and literature.

"A confluence of mountain streams formed a lake in the pleasure-grounds of the castle. On this lake there were several islets ; on one of them he inhabited a pavilion, situated in the midst of a delicious grove, round which was a number of lesser pavilions, occupied by learned and ingenious men, whom the baron, by his munificence, had collected around him. One of these distinguished pavilions was immediately assigned to me. The baron  
loved

loved to have his poets and men of letters about him, like——”

“Rabbits in a warren,” muttered Chastelar.

“Rather say, brother, like satellites round a planet. The number of these apartments, including his own, amounted to twelve, answering to the twelve signs of the Zodiac, and being made of a peculiarly fine yellow marble, they shone with a burnished brightness when Phœbus darted through the grove his golden rays. I was wont therefore pleasantly to term this our poetical establishment the Palace of the Sun, and the apartment particularly allotted to myself, Sagittarius, from whence I dispensed the shafts of wit and poesy. Here lord Conrad beguiled many an hour, discussing questions of divine philosophy : these our learned recreations were again diversified by the pleasures of music, the banquet, and the chase. Oh, moments worthy of the immortal gods! are ye doomed never to return?”

Here

Here Aimar paused, delighted. None possessed in greater perfection than our poet that sort of eloquence which, under the veil of kind acknowledgment, conceals a boast. Notwithstanding the numerous complaints of forgetfulness and ingratitude, there is one instance at least in which the expression of gratitude is rather exaggerated than repressed. It is in the descriptions given by travellers of the caresses bestowed on them by the great, and the attentions of the inhabitants of a foreign country. To *appear* happy seems still more the object of mankind than to *be* so; and to this principle we may refer many rapturous details, and tender reminiscences of scenes and persons, which, when present, excited perhaps but a moderate degree of interest.

"But to return, brother," said Chastelar, who without exactly reasoning thus, listened to the poet's tale with some degree of incredulity.

"Rightly you bid me return," the minstrel said: "fancy had wandered into a delicious

delicious maze; my thoughts roved from subject to subject, like a bird hopping from branch to branch, and had just alighted upon a golden one, laden with fruit of rubies and emeralds. But to resume the thread of my narrative.

“With lord Conrad there *were* hours when poetry could not sooth, nor philosophy delight him: then would he withdraw from our society, and seclude himself in the darkest groves; sometimes also he would visit alone the Diamond Palace.”

“The Diamond Palace!” exclaimed Rose, quite dazzled by the minstrel’s wonders.

“Such was the name,” resumed Chastelar, “of one of the numerous pleasure-houses with which the islands of the lake were studded; nor was it called so from the precious gems of rare antiquity with which it was adorned—the paintings from Italy—the statues of alabaster, and the hangings of gold and silver tissue which shone beneath the starry lamps like very diamonds—

diamonds—no, it owed its name to another cause. In a casket, within a strong closet in that palace, lord Conrad kept his jewels, the finest diamonds in the empire; and these were destined to be possessed by her who should prove to be his lady-love. But, alas! lord Conrad had lost the lady of his love, and vowed she should never be replaced by any other; and he had shrouded in darkness the gems that had been once a gift to her, and had said that in the palace they should remain unappropriated for ever. But grief does not always last; the vows of men are frail. Should you not like to possess those priceless diamonds, Rose?"

"No, on my truth," answered the guileless damsel; "but I should like, unknown, unseen myself, to hear and see this wonderful lord of Rammelsberg."

"A glorious choice," answered Chasteler, "and one that may yet be gratified. There is a chord in lord Conrad's bosom yet to be touched. Formerly indeed women

men were excluded from this paradise; and the ladies to whom his unsocial melancholy did this wrong, revenged themselves according to their wont; and, in consideration of his wealth, his lake palaces, and his partial loneliness, were wont merrily to style him the Monk of the Isles of Gold, a strange title, and long unappropriated, although once familiar in men's minds as belonging to the faithful chronicler of the romantic Troubadours.

“ I now come to the arrival of the prince of Condé. When this prince had opened to the baron the object of his mission, I would you had witnessed the change—the sudden lighting up of lord Conrad's mind: he described to him his heroic nephew, Henry of Navarre; placed almost from infancy at the head of a suffering and persecuted party, the hope of the brave, the delight of the peasant—afterwards as the gay, the gallant, the loyal chevalier—as preserving his truth untarnished in a court where all was falsehood—his feeling heart  
amid

amid massacres and blood—as forming himself upon the model of Bayard, whose memory he revered, and as worthy alone, by his virtues and singleness of heart, to be accounted the successor of the peerless chevalier. Lord Conrad acknowledged in this portrait the brother of his heart; but when the prince explained to him his further views—when he painted the grieved and distressed Hugonots, as driven by persecution to assert their rights by force of arms—when he pointed out the dawn of liberty and liberal opinions that were arising from the bosom of tyranny, and the harvest of glory a stranger might reap by assisting in the struggle for freedom in a foreign land, the spirit of lord Conrad seemed to expand and dilate itself with the subject—to have at length found a sphere worthy of its action.

“ His eye, now turned upon us—now thoughtfully bent upon the ground, seemed to say—‘ Awake, soul of Conrad! too long hast thou been wasted upon gauds. In thy native country thou hast drained  
the



the cup of misery to the dregs; but hope beckons thee to acquire, on a foreign shore, the glory that has here been denied! Thy riches are not valueless since they can relieve the oppressed; thy youth, thy worth, thy valour, shall not perish without a record that thou hast lived!

“ From that moment there was an end of our pleasant pastimes in the Isles of Gold, our moonlight walks, and morning discourses; the new works of his poets no longer excited lord Conrad's curiosity, nor could the disputes of his learned men awaken his solicitude. But how much more glorious were the pursuits by which these were replaced!

“ This young nobleman, accustomed, until now, to a life of pleasure or of ease, spent every moment in inuring himself to the hardships of the field. The earth was his couch—his diet was of the simplest kind—and the incessant attention he gave to his military studies and exercises, made him grudge even the necessary time devoted to sleep. Our establishment on the lake

lake was broken up, and the castle transformed into a camp; his vassals were drawn from all sides to be trained in the exercises of war.

“At length the day arrived when the baron, with the flower of his chosen band, waited on the elector palatine. Never shall I forget the chivalrous, the princely grace with which lord Conrad made the tender of his services to the elector palatine, and placed himself and his troops under the command of prince John Casimir. All eyes were fixed on the reiter baron; his gallant deportment, his exquisite mien, were the theme of every tongue.

“Accompanied by the prince of Condé, who, on his first taking refuge in Germany, had been declared generalissimo of the Protestant troops in France, we pushed on for the frontiers. Meantime I, like the poet Tyrtæus, forsook the elegiac muse, to animate the advancing troops with songs of battle.

“By the junction of the prince of  
Condé,

Condé with the duke d'Alençon and the king of Navarre, the Protestant army amounted to fifty thousand men. When the king of Navarre and the baron Rammeisberg met, the baron more particularly tendered his homage to *him*. It was near Tours that the first essay of our arms was made. The baron distinguished himself in several skirmishes by a brilliant and romantic valour, a courage that borrowed from his formerly poetic character a certain tinge of the ideal and the heroic, which cast around his freshly-gathered laurels a light that played with unexpected and lambent glory.

“In one of these affairs it was his fortune to preserve, with imminent danger to his own person, the life of the young king of Navarre. When the king thanked him, with that effusion of feeling which makes all his favours and words so precious, for having thus preserved his days at the hazard of his own life, the baron replied, with a sudden return of bitterness  
of

of spirit—‘ My life! would to Heaven, great prince, I had any thing less worthless to offer you!’

“ Our triumphs were of short duration. Queen Catherine (far be it from me to speak disrespectfully of her majesty), thus threatened by an army whose very numbers gave it a right to expect easy victory, exerted that consummate prudence, which malignant persons have denominated art; and her well-directed efforts terminated in the famous ‘ *Peace of Monsieur*,’ so called because monsieur the duke d’Alençon was more benefited by it than any other of the allied princes. He obtained a large appanage, and several other advantages for himself, a sum of money and jewels for prince Casimir, and the government of Picardy, with the power of withdrawing into the town of Peronne for the prince of Condé; but nothing was done for the king of Navarre, which gave the Saxon baron the opportunity of exhibiting the

particular proof of his affection to him which I am about to relate.

“ At parting, the king of Navarre, in acknowledgment of the signal service of lord Conrad, would not suffer him to repeat the customary homage; but leaping from his horse, held him for some moments in a soldier's strict embrace.

‘ Keep a good heart, great sir!’ cried baron Conrad. ‘ Though sudden peace now blights our promised laurels, the day may come when the entrance of the Germans into France may terminate in more than empty pageant. Meanwhile, since we cannot, as we wish, assist the cause with steel, accept, great prince, the meaner offering of gold—gold which can never afford its master such satisfaction as when employed in the promotion of the cause of truth and liberty.’

“ With that, they say, lord Conrad presented, and forced the king of Navarre to accept such a subsidy as never was obtained from the greatest princes of the empire;

pire; and the prince of Condé, remembering him of the strange title the baron bore in Germany, with a look somewhat envious and disdainful, observed—‘ No marvel, nephew, if we princes of the blood appear but beggars in comparison of this rich Saxon lord; but all men know the resources of the lord Conrad are WONDERFUL!’

“ Content to be great, lord Conrad reconciled himself to being calumniated. His conduct on the retreat formed a beautiful sequel to all his former actions. While riot and disorder reigned in the camp of prince Casimir, the most rigorous discipline was kept up among the reiters, commanded by the baron of Rammelsberg; and their leader diffused his riches with a munificence that made the desert, which war had created, bloom again like the rose.

“ The years that have elapsed since this incursion of the German allies have only matured lord Conrad’s zeal in the cause of freedom: we approve the principle, but would a little alter its application. Others

and more illustrious sufferers than even the king of Navarre are fain at length to call in foreign aid against domestic treachery. Oh, brother, there is one who rules, a tyrant, although none confess his power—there is one who lives a slave, although his brow be encircled with a royal diadem !” Here Aimar paused, sighed heavily, and seemed to think he had said too much before his youthful hearers ; but his last words had fallen unheeded upon the ear of Rose, whose mind was absorbed in the contemplation of the wondrous excellencies of the Black Baron. A deep abstraction had seized upon her spirits—such a picture of rare, of disinterested worth, had never been presented to her mind before—it was a picture fraught with danger.

Retired within their chamber, the two fair daughters of the valley enjoyed an interchange of the feelings that had agitated them during the day.

The communications of Blanche were indeed important, and she hastened to  
pour

pour into her sister's bosom the hopes and prospects that so agreeably filled her own. Yes, it was true, Henry loved her—had told her so—had demanded her plighted faith in return, and received her promise to live only for him.

Rose loved her sister too sincerely to feel the least intermixture of envy at her happiness; yet, with her accustomed playfulness, could not forbear rallying her on the length of time she had passed that evening in the converse of the chevalier.

"Excuse me," answered Blanche, "I was part of the time at the cottage of his favourites, Jeannette and Eustache."

"Oh, I read you now! To visit those poor old people, is only another way of being with Henry. No doubt they were as usual eloquent in his praises, and, unsuspected, you enjoyed the delightful pleasure of pronouncing that beloved name in return—of hearing from other lips of his pursuits—his plans."

"And would you not, Rose, have ex-



perienced a similar delight to hear Florestan thus named ?”

“Florestan ! trifier !—no. He to whom Rose surrenders up her heart must not be the *second* figure in any canvas, however bright and glowing. Rather let me describe him as lonely, unapproachable, desolate, yet not inaccessible to the consolations of female love ; as hapless himself, yet making others happy ; rich, yet unblest by riches, save as he distributes them ; brave, but employing his disinterested sword, not in mercenary warfare, but in defending the cause of the oppressed ; in short——”

“Such as our uncle paints lord Conrad,” interrupted Blanche, rallying in her turn, “and such as perhaps has no existence but in his poetical imagination. Oh, that fatal picture ! Beware, Rose, of a delusion far greater than mine ; although I am willing to acknowledge my past fears and agonies, now that painful doubt is changed into blissful certainty. How often have I  
dreaded

dreaded that even in a sigh *his* name should escape me!—a vague and indefinite terror, a sickening apprehension, has oppressed me, that even as it passed my lips its owner too would fly. How often has that presentiment kept me silent, when otherwise I would have spoken of him! At other times, the fear that I was deceiving myself, that he did not truly love me, has shot like an icebolt to my soul; then have I thought that a day would come, and *that* not distant, when Henry would depart—would forget the Glass Valley, and all its inhabitants; and *that* thought, like the fabled vampyre, has fastened and brooded upon my heart, as though it drew the life-blood from it; and I have said, sinfully said, that it counterbalanced the felicity I enjoyed with him. But no more doubts for me; rejoice with me, my sister, Henry's heart is as pure as that gentle, that noble countenance; and my father himself knows and approves his love, and knows I believe the secret causes that

must still in some sort wrap it in the veil of caution and mystery. He has also received some secret communication from Florestan, and has taxed me, as your most dearly-loved 'adviser, to learn from you how far your heart is disposed to approve his suit."

"Ha! to engage my father!" exclaimed Rose, whom her new prepossession prepared to view every proceeding of Florestan's with a jaundiced eye—"I shall never approve his suit; nor was it well of him to arm authority against me before he had consulted my heart."

This was the only reply Blanche could obtain, and when communicated in the sequel to Florestan, was certainly so cold as to shake any but the most persevering constancy, which did not appear the peculiar characteristic of the chevalier. While Blanche at length sunk to sleep, indulging in the innocent exultation of her heart respecting Henry, and the wonderful image of the lord Conrad, at once so dark, so bright,

bright, flitted around Rose's less tranquil pillow, the poet was listening, with a countenance of varying import, to the sire de Chastelar's account of the introduction of the two distinguished strangers into the valley.

"A strange tale this, Raoul," cried he, "that two young warlike knights should voluntarily take upon themselves the life of *Gentilhomme Verriers*—a life which——"

"Hold you there, brother! not a word against the *Gentilhomme Verriers*—the first gentlemen in France need not disdain them."

"I speak not against them," resumed Aimar de Chastelar, "it is against these young errant knights that I would warn you: you, brother, have led so long a life of innocence and seclusion, that you are no match for the artifices with which the world abounds."

This was an inauspicious commencement. There was nothing on which the sire de Chastelar prided himself so much,

as on his penetration and knowledge of the world. Though long a recluse, he had once known courts and camps, and would have wished others always to remember that it was so. This feeling rendered Aimar de Chastelar's double pretensions to superiority, both as a statesman and a poet, particularly irksome to him; and, sincerely as he loved his brother, it was often as much as he could do to dissemble his impatience. But now, for reasons known only to his own breast, he felt that he had the advantage over Aimar de Chastelar; he therefore replied, with more complacency than usual—"I see, brother, which way your suspicions point; but even supposing them to have hit the mark, is it so very extraordinary that two noble youths should wear the chains of two such lovely maidens as my daughters?"

"Oh no, assuredly," replied the poet, coolly. "Even as king Henry of Navarre once assumed a peasant's garb to chase a pretty nymph, or was transformed  
into

into an humble swain to please the fair Fleurette, the gardener's beauteous daughter."

"Brother," quoth the sire de Chastelar, "I never questioned your skill in the composition of a ballad or a roundelay—the like indulgence I crave touching the bringing up of my daughters. Where in this valley should I find their fitting mate? Can I expect they will be demanded in marriage by embassy, like the daughters of Lorraine? I bless Providence that has conducted hither two young knights, worthy and willing to win them by birth and service; besides, although perchance I wink at their romantic humour, I am neither ignorant nor blind. Suppose I told you that I knew the young Florestan to be the son of an ancient comrade."

"And the other—the other," asked Chastelar, significantly, "know you *whose* son he is?"

"I know as far as he has been pleased

to communicate; and of thus much I am certain—that he is not unworthy of aspiring to the hand of Blanche.”

There was a look of gravity, mixed with a certain degree of irony, in the countenance of the sire de Chastelar, which baffled the poet's penetration, and left him in doubt whether his brother, in assuming this very high tone, were indeed bantering or not; and to confess the truth, the sire de Chastelar felt no little pleasure in his more worldly brother's perplexity.

Observing he had silenced him, Chastelar continued—“Should the star of Blanche point to high destinies, I have no right to cross its influence.”

“How! did I hear you well?” interposed Aimar; “a father no *right* in the disposal of his child?”

The sire de Chastelar felt, in his turn, that he had said too much, and left the discourse to his brother, who, however, much to his surprise and satisfaction, instead of pressing him further on the subject,

ject, seemed rather inclined to apologize for his attempted interference.—“ In good faith, brother,” he said, “ I expressed myself with unwonted haste; inasmuch as my spleen was raised against those two gallants, lest they might forestall me, and traverse a plan I have in contemplation for my little Rosebud, which may wholly change the colour of her destiny, and raise her higher than even your sanguine wishes ever pointed. Rose de Chastelar has talents, and it is my fault if they have not received due cultivation. With wit and beauty, a woman in these times may rule the world. But of this, more anon. As my plan is interwoven with the best interests of the state, it may be necessary to premise——”

“ Why, brother,” interrupted the sire de Chastelar, impatiently, “ the genius of Italian intrigue has surely bitten you in the shape of a French-Italian queen.—Think you such plans can suit my pretty Rose? At all events, whatever they be,  
I crave



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I crave a truce; for by my halidom, you have so bewildered my poor brain with your tales of wonderful warriors and reiter barons, that mine eyes and ears feel a *wonderful* desire of rest."

**CHAP.**

CHAPTER VIII.  
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.. For often in the parting hour
 Victorious Love asserts his power
 O'er coldness and disdain:
 And hard must be her heart can view
 To battle march a lover true,
 And hear perhaps his last adieu,
 Nor own her share of pain. *Marmion.*

It should seem as if in all affairs in which human happiness is concerned, there was a certain point, and that beyond this stated bound, error and misery commenced. This point in the life of each individual appears to be the moment in which a sentiment of happiness transports the mind so far beyond its usual equanimity, as to banish from memory the precarious tenure of all earthly blessings, and the heart is betrayed into an imprudent exultation in the certainty

certainty and permanence of felicity. If ever we might feel inclined to acquiesce in the local superstition that forbids boastful praises, unaccompanied by a blessing and prayer for the continuance of good, it would be on such occasions.

How often is the blooming promise of love unaccountably blighted! Some angry relative, some officious friend, or even some obtrusive stranger, may possess the power to break the golden link that binds two hearts for ever.

With our heroine, Blanche de Chastellar, it seemed to be the arrival of her uncle that suddenly overcast the scene. The evening before beheld her leaning on the arm of Henry, rejoicing in the smiles of nature, but chiefly rejoicing in the consciousness that nothing in all the animated scene before her was half so happy as her heart.

The next morning, instinctively, she bent her steps towards the same spot, and there encountered Henry again; but, oh! how

how different from the tender, impassioned, lovely, and gentle knight her fancy had pictured him! Watching and anxiety had produced on his countenance the effect of illness, and one who had seen him for the first time would have acknowledged little of the distinguished graces of the far-celebrated Cadet le Perle.

But to Blanche, though his sufferings might excite inquietude in her mind, his ill looks could never strike her eye. In every change, to her, he seemed alike the first of men. At first, indeed, her admiration might have been the more speedily kindled by that matchless mien, of "pure and princely beauty;" but it was long since she had ceased to prefer that form and those features for any other reason than because they were *his*. To every other she was blind and indifferent, and even in Henry himself no change of mind or person *now* could influence her, while that *self* remained. Conscious that her thoughts had been dwelling on him,

Blanche,

Blanche, on seeing Henry, started back a few paces and blushed. He caught hold of her hand.—“If you have not abjured me,” he passionately exclaimed—“if the sight of me is not hateful to you, you shall not, Blanche—you shall not fly me thus.”

“Hateful!” exclaimed Blanche, faltering between terror and grief, “what can prompt such a thought?—in what can I, since yesterday, have offended you?”

“In *what*?” replied Henry, resentfully: “Blanche, if your heart does not answer that question, there is no longer any sympathy between it and mine.”

Overwhelmed by this cruel accusation, Blanche sunk upon a rustic seat and wept. Henry approached her with a softened air. Blanche could not be comforted.—“Ungenerous man!” she cried, “thus cruelly to torture a heart that leant for all its happiness upon thee.”

“Nay, I will believe you were not aware how deeply you wounded me,”
Henry

Henry resumed; "yet what could be so galling to the man who had treasured up his soul in you, as to see you dart from his side with the joyous animation of expected pleasure, as if each instant I had detained you had been a grievous thralldom; and the moment you chose to do so, Blanche, was that in which my heart, agonized by some crosses *that* morning had revealed, sought to pour all its love, all its sorrow, all its passion at your feet?"

Blanche was silent; for the vehement protestations of Henry placed the past in a new point of view to her. When Henry spoke of love, it seemed to her innocent heart synonymous with happiness; and till he thus alluded to it, she had not doubted he shared in the serene felicity he had communicated to herself.

"Yes, Blanche," continued Henry, passionately—"torn by conflicting emotions, I was on the point of telling you that the avowal of my love must be followed by our immediate separation, and that a cruel power,

power, a power that I could not dispute, summoned me for an indefinite time from the adored precincts of the Glass Valley. But you fled from me; and while you were rejoicing with the newly-arrived stranger, I spent a night of agony such as I never wish my worst enemy to endure."

The grief of Blanche was now of a far deeper and more deadly nature than before; but it did not, as before, exhaust itself in tears. At the prospect of losing Henry, all his trifling foibles, his passionate errors, vanished from her view; and while contemplating this unimaginable evil, she forgot that his presence had ever inflicted upon her a moment's pain.

"My gentlest love!" exclaimed Henry, repentant, and completely convinced of the injustice of his reproaches, by the unaffected anguish that overwhelmed her, "can you forgive the undeserved pain my fatal temper has inflicted on the best of beings?"

"*Can* I forgive?" exclaimed Blanche, looking

looking up, and smiling through her tears —“ can I forgive? oh, Henry! and at such a moment to lose you!”——“To lose you, when so restored me!” she would have said, for his transient displeasure had rendered his returning tenderness one of the happiest moments of her life.

Henry hung over her in speechless sorrow, and seemed, like herself, to dread the moment of pronouncing farewell.—“ My angel Blanche,” he cried, “ I leave you, but it is only for a season; I have plighted my solemn vows to thee; and *he* could expect no mercy in this world, or in the next, who could harbour a thought of betraying thee. Nay, let me see thee smile again,” he continued, in a lighter tone. “ Sweet Blanche, long enough has love bent me down, a willing captive in thy sphere—it is time I reflected what I can accomplish towards elevating thee to *mine*.”

Though these words contained a delightful and brilliant prospect, there was something

something in the tone of superiority of which Cadet le Perle, in his tenderest moments, could never totally divest himself, that grated on the delicate feelings and honest pride of Blanche; and these lately-reconciled lovers might have been almost led into a second quarrel, if she had not observed this pride seemed rather the result of certain habits, long fostered, till they had become a second nature, than of any deficiency in respect or tenderness. She endeavoured to rally herself into something more of firmness; and though it may be strange to assert it, her efforts were the more successful, from observing how great a share of this sorrow seemed to press upon Henry's manly heart: still he tried to smile away the gathering tears that, in spite of all her efforts, returned to Blanche's eyes.—“Nay, weep not, my fair,” he cried; “it is true, that at the hour of parting the horizon seems to close—dense clouds lower all around us; but this is not love's proper atmosphere—it is
a vapour

a vapour raised by tears; soon will the clouds disperse; Hope will be seen beckoning in the distant horizon—*her rainbow signal shines*, and the sun of happiness will burst forth. Blanche, beloved Blanche! this is no poet's dream. *The rainbow, that spans the heavens, yet bends its arch to earth.* Look up, dear girl, and *when you see that sign*, let it say to your heart.—‘I AM THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT AND PEACE.’

Softly were the words breathed, and in almost inaudible sighs, as he bent over his weeping charge; yet Blanche's heart caught the sound; and she felt they included a solemn, though mysterious pledge, which Henry one day would redeem.

“Your father has already received my adieus,” he resumed—“my thanks I can never adequately return; but thus much I can promise, that he never shall have cause to repent the hospitality he has extended

tended towards two strangers in the Glass Valley."

He paused, unwilling further to prolong the pang of parting, yet unable to tear himself from the object that an imperious necessity commanded him to forego. At length the moment arrived; the knight vaulted on his gallant grey, pronounced a last benediction, with suffused eyes and trembling lips, and in a few moments disappeared.

Blanche watched his progress, till horse and horseman were lost through the trees; but he had not left her totally bereft of consolation. Had she been told before she met him, that the hour of parting was so near, Blanche would have supposed that days must intervene ere she could recover even the semblance of composure; but Henry's last words, like a beam from heaven, had wonderfully reassured and elevated her soul. She possessed a treasured hope, a secret precious source of consolation, she would not have exchanged
for

for all the world could give; and, fortified by this assurance, was able to fulfil the duties that were still allotted to her with cheerfulness, a serene brow, and a resigned, if not a happy heart.

When Blanche was next seen by her father, her countenance bore scarcely any trace of the vicissitudes of the morning. The minstrel was amusing his two beloved nieces, by shewing them his travelling wardrobe, which consisted of various disguises, that he represented as eminently useful, in case of difficulties or surprise in any perilous undertaking.

Rose was trying them all on in turn, and much delighted with masquerading it—now in the habit of a pilgrim, again in that of a Bohemian, and anon in that of a friar, though of what order she was unable to determine.

“I have not shewn you my favourite yet,” said the minstrel; and opening a little black velvet trunk, he revealed to the astonished eyes of Rose a dress evidently

dently intended for a youth, and such as might be worn on ceremonial occasions, by a young Provençal aspirant at the Floral Games. It was of the darkest purple, richly embroidered in silver, with foliage and devices emblematic of the minstrel calling. A harp, mounted in silver, was laid alongside of the dress, and completed this characteristic costume.

The minstrel pressed Rose to retire with Blanche, and try it on; but she, laughing, evaded his request. Still she admired the dress greatly, though she could not conceive for what use it was intended.—“Dear uncle,” said she, “is it not strange you should cumber yourself with a disguise so useless? for it requires no witch to tell me *that* which would fit *me* well, cannot be of much avail to you.”

“Suppose I had it made on purpose, at Paris, to fit your shape?” said the minstrel, with a significant look.

Rose coloured, but made no reply.

“Listen to me, Rose, while I unfold
my

my plan to you," said Chastelar, seriously.
 " You know I have already apprized you
 that the lord Conrad——"

At this name of the prince of her dreams,
 the crimson glow redoubled upon Rose's
 cheek.

Without appearing to notice her emotion, Chastelar proceeded—" The lord Conrad has continued to spend his time at his castle, abjuring the society of your sex; yet much I mistake him, or his mind is formed to be moulded by female influence. You, Rose, can materially assist our plans, and at the same time perhaps raise yourself to such a pinnacle of grandeur——"

" For mercy's sake, dear uncle——"

" Have patience—hear me out. My plan is briefly this :—I have instructed you in every form of poetry, from the pleasant *tenzon* to the learned *sonnet* and the touching *romance*. Lord Conrad is an idolizer of music and the muse. A young person like you, well skilled in the exercises he loves, would supply all that my

old head wants in the means of persuasion. I would introduce you as my nephew, a youth from the plains of Provence; under the guise of this garb, you would both travel with more safety, and approach the secluded baron without danger or suspicion. And who knows," concluded the poet, with a significant look of encouragement, "that lord Conrad's love of minstrelsy may extend into love for the minstrel, when he throws off his disguise, and you may have the glory, my girl, of drawing from his unsocial solitude the first spirit in the world?"

Rose was overwhelmed with confusion; all she had heard of the Diamond Palace, the Palace of the Sun, and the Monk of the Isles of Gold, recurred to her dazzled imagination; she remembered the ardent desire she had experienced, only the night before, to behold this CONRAD THE WONDERFUL; and now it was proposed to her to be brought into his presence—to witness his splendour—to enjoy his greatness—and,

—and, oh, far more tempting offer! (her name and sex unsuspected,) to hear and behold HIMSELF! Her uncle promised to be her safeguard against danger; and her memory and her glass equally whispered to her, that all that appeared most sanguine and romantic in the anticipations of the poet might not prove vain. All she had wished—all she had meditated, about the lord Conrad, brought a palpitation to her heart and a blush to her cheek; and the prospect of having so soon realized what she had contemplated as being beyond the remotest chance of probability, struck her as a coincidence little short of miraculous. But the more her enthusiastic imagination set before her, in the most flattering colours, the pleasure it would be to approach his wondrous virtues—to see, to hear him—perhaps in turn to excite his admiration and applause, the more her native modesty of mind pointed out to her the extravagance of the plan by which the warm-hearted, but wrong-headed

poet proposed to accomplish this desirable end; and a decided negative, expressed in terms so strong as rather to disconcert her uncle, was given without hesitation by Rose, to his extraordinary proposal.

To the arguments he used to shake her resolution, she was happy to oppose the additional influence of her father, who, when informed of it, utterly rejected and ridiculed the idea.—“No,” said he, “my rosebuds must be sought, not forced upon the notice of any man, however great, in the guise of errant damoysel, clothed in the doublet of a page, like some of the ballads, Aimar, you were wont to rehearse of yore.”

“I think, brother,” said Aimar, nettled by this double rejection, “you might allow my knowledge of the world and of courts to weigh against your utter ignorance and seclusion, in any question touching my niece’s honour—I trust I am as jealous on that point as yourself. Under
my

my care no insult could approach her. This is no common aim, nor is it any common adventure."

"I believe so, Aimar," returned the sire de Chastelar, coolly; "and as I am by no means desirous my daughters should be distinguished by uncommon adventures, we will, with your good leave, let the matter drop."

"And welcome, brother, though, by so doing, you perhaps lose a son-in-law."

"Perhaps I have fixed on one already."

"Oh, brother, if that be the case indeed, I have nothing to reply."

"Dear father," exclaimed Rose, impressed with a new alarm, "do not, I beseech you, attribute my refusal to having bestowed my heart already—I would not, for worlds, that you thought so! No, I have no other wish, no other desire on earth, than to remain within the precincts of the Glass Valley, and to preserve the freedom and innocent liberty I have hi-

therto enjoyed to contribute to your felicity."

"A likely story!" said the sire de Chastelar, with a paternal smile; "no, no, my rosebud, I shall find your match without the assistance of the Wonderful Baron."

"Prithee, brother, harp no more upon that string," exclaimed the minstrel, peevishly—for he perhaps began to perceive the absurdity of his own plan, or perhaps was provoked that others had perceived it; "I can wend my way without the beloved little pilgrim I had pictured to myself for my companion.—Bless you, Rose, my girl! and may the husband your father provides for you possess a tenth part of the merits of the wondrous being that appeared to me cut out by nature for your counterpart!"

With these words Aimar swallowed, with some ill-humour, the parting refreshments that were provided for him; and ordering a youth that attended him to dispose

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dispose his miscellaneous baggage upon a sumpter mule, took his solitary way towards the abode of the Black Baron.

of these two lovely girls, that they should understand their relative positions, both with regard to him and to each other.

Rose and Blanche were seated one on each side of him. The sire de Chastelar appeared absorbed in pensive rather than gloomy meditation. His daughters held each a hand, on which they bent their lovely brows, as if the effect of his melancholy had been contagious.

Blanche was the first to be aroused from this pensive reverie—it was by the well-known sounds of the chapel bell. She raised her head—looked with animation towards the chapel—and seemed in momentary expectation of some dearly-loved object's approach. Soon recollection dissolved the spell—blushing, she started, sighed deeply, and raised her eyes to heaven. It was a beautiful evening: on one side of the horizon the moon arose amid the sky's purest azure—on the other, the heavens, whence the sun had just departed, were still tinted with a thousand glowing

glowing and confused, but lovely hues.—
 “Emblems of past and present!” thought
 the sorrowing Blanche; “yon full-orbed
 moon reigns like the calm effulgence of
 hope and joy—yon setting sun closes like
 the night of disappointment and regret.”

The sire de Chastelar appeared not to
 notice her emotion, yet was in reality in-
 tent on diverting its course.—“How dif-
 ferent, on different minds,” he observed,
 “are the effects produced by the tolling
 bell! that sound was once the signal for
 a scene of which those who have survived
 its horrors preserve the recollection on
 their seared hearts and burning brain for
 ever!—Oh, St. Barthélemi! day matchless
 and unparalleled in the annals of blood
 and crime! when will the hideous phan-
 toms that your memory awakens leave
 him who escaped you, and who was yet
 your victim, a moment of repose!”

“You escaped, and yet you were the
 victim of the massacre! dear father, how
 can that be?” said the animated Rose,
 whose

whose mind, less engrossed than that of Blanche by the past, was more easily aroused to curiosity.

"I have not awakened inquiries, my dear girls, without the intention of satisfying them," said the sire de Chastelar, who chose to suppose Rose and Blanche equally desirous of hearing his story. "The time is arrived for the communication I long have meditated; and this hour, that disposes the mind to meditation, is the best suited to the

HISTORY OF

RAOUL DE CHASTELAR.

"THE NAME OF CHASTELAR is for ever connected with the most tragic page in the history of the tyranny of love. The fate of one of the members of our unhappy family, may operate as a warning to the young and impassioned.

" My

“ My uncle was that daring and hapless Chastelar, who expiated upon a scaffold his mad passion for a Scottish queen. A soldier by profession, and a poet by choice, Chastelar looked to glory as the proper reward of one pursuit, and to beauty as that of the other. His youth, his valour, his fine person, and numerous attainments, all promised him distinction in the morning of his career. He saw bright Mary in all the flower and spring of her charms, and a veil seemed to descend between him and every other object. Coldness, coldness alone, and the dignity befitting a queen, might yet have preserved his senses and his life; but the conduct of Mary was unsteady, and she threw out to the enthusiast hopes that lured him on to destruction. Too late she perceived her error—too late she resumed the majesty of the queen. Unhappy Chastelar! obloquy has covered thy memory—bladder has misrepresented thy motives, yet thy intentions were pure.

“ Aware

"Aware of the insidious whispers of malice, Chastelar sought a private audience of the queen. He was discovered armed in his concealment, and the queen, indignant, ordered him from her sight. He followed her when she withdrew from the Scottish capital, a reckless man, desperate, and careless of life, bent on his one object of justification, determined to recover Mary's esteem, or die. When he presented himself a second time before her, terror and indignation rendered Mary cruel. Envy had represented his former attempt as aimed at her honour and her life; she now thought that the moment for severity was arrived. She summoned the ruthless Murray to her aid, and in her agitation, commanded him to plunge a dagger into the faithful heart that already bled in every vein for her.

"Murray disobeyed the mandate, but it was only to reserve a gallant soldier for the lingering horrors of a public and ignominious death. The lips of her he adored—

adored—of her whose smile had opened to him the gates of paradise, pronounced the fiat of his fate. Love and poetry deserted him not in the last moments of his life—alas! I fear they had too much influence with him even in those awful moments—he died repeating the hymn which Ronsard has composed upon death, and breathing a prayer for HER who thus rewarded devotion so tender and true.

“ The bent of mind of our unfortunate uncle seemed to be divided, by descent, between my brother and myself; Aimar inherited his imagination and poetic fire, but all the *real* force of passion was concentrated in *my* breast. I carried the same ardour into the feelings of friendship, and devoted admiration of whatsoever was great and noble; and it was thus I felt when (in consequence of private obligations to him), after experiencing many vicissitudes, I chose the service of the admiral de Coligny.

“ At this time the princes of the blood,
the

the Guises, the Montmorencys, and other chiefs of great houses, piqued themselves upon the number of adherents they could attach to themselves, persons devoted to their cause, and preferring their interest even to that of the throne. Young gentlemen of noble houses were prompt to enter into this dignified service, which afforded them opportunities of forming their own manners upon the most shining examples. Each gentleman styled the chief he followed *his master*; but he felt ennobled by that servitude—Honour was his only real sovereign, and the bond of his attachment to his leader the virtues he admired."

The sire de Chastelar paused. Blanche remembered that the last time he had spoken of this heroic species of attachment it was in the presence of another and dear auditor, now far away; she missed Henry's voice in the conversation, discussing the subject with him. The daughter gave a sigh

sigh to the memory of the absent, the father to that of the dead.

The sire de Chastelar resumed—"It was at mature years, and after having passed through the service of other masters, I entered into that of admiral de Coligny; but the comparisons I was thus enabled to make only increased the admiration with which I contemplated him. But the more the illustrious Coligny appeared to me elevated by his character above the common standard of mankind, the greater was my surprise and chagrin to observe that he was not happy, that some secret afflictions preyed upon him, and prevented his enjoying the high fortune to which his merit and talents alike entitled him.

"As I soon distinguished myself from the other gentlemen of his train, by the extraordinary zeal and pleasure with which I executed his commands, the admiral condescended to notice what was passing in my mind; and one day that I had fixed my

my eyes, with unconscious earnestness, on his countenance, asked me, with good-humoured affability, what it was affected me so, and what I saw there?

“ Emboldened by his manner, I replied — ‘ I see, sir, the pillar of the Protestant state, the Mentor of his young sovereign, the renowned warrior and statesman, who combines every quality that constitutes a man good and great; how then can I choose but sigh further to observe, that even such qualities cannot ensure him happiness?’ ”

“ Astonished at the extent of my own temerity, I waited, in trembling apprehension, the admiral’s reply. The benignity of his eye was not altered, nor the composure of his noble countenance changed, by the observation he had invited; a slight inflexion of the voice alone shewed that I had aroused painful thoughts, while the venerable man replied— ‘ It is natural for you to imagine that happiness must attend the possession of those objects which are pointed out as the ultimate goal

goal of your ambition, but you see only the surface of things; I have *that within* which would urge to some fatal catastrophe a man whose mind was less made up on the immutable justice of Providence. What do you say to having, in my public capacity, the sword of Damocles hanging by a single thread, and suspended perpetually over my devoted head, while, in private life, the dearest affections of my heart, and even my wishes for the eternal welfare of those I most love, are crossed and contravened by the wickedness and perverseness of man?"

"I was so struck with what I heard, and so abashed thus to have aroused all the latent sorrows of the admiral's breast, that I was totally unable to ask any explanation of these unintelligible words, had he not graciously added of himself—
 'Yes, Chastelar, look at this white head, blanched in the service of my country—these hands, indurated by warfare and its honourable toils; this is the head which a princely

princely enemy thirsts to lay low, and to soil my grey locks in the dust of a dishonourable grave. These are the hands that he dares accuse of being embrued in the foulest of all crimes, even in base and treacherous—murder?

“As he pronounced this last word the countenance of my venerable friend became convulsed, his lip quivered, and his dim eye, lighted up for a moment with the fires of youth, shewed how deeply the horror of such an accusation had entered into his soul. I sympathized with him too deeply to dare to ask him to be more explicit; but, after a moment's pause, he resumed—‘The prince who, wherever he goes, tarnishes my name with this foul accusation, has long taken an oath to have a deep and bloody vengeance on my head. God is my witness how much he wrongs me, but it avails not. My enemy waits his time; subtle, vindictive, and deceitful, he will yet find a way to bring the dagger home to my heart—may it arrive when

when I can best be spared, and I shall contentedly resign my wearied spirit!

"The old man bowed his head, and seemed to look to the termination of his enemy's revenge with a sort of melancholy joy. Perhaps the next sentence accounted for it—it touched upon the source of his private sorrows.—'I have a daughter—I should rather say, I *had* a daughter,' he continued with a sigh, 'who ought to have been the consolation of my age, my refuge when the dark thoughts of a blighted name and a violent end come (as they often do) over my mind, and shadow it with gloom; but she is taken from me—wrested by the insidious arts of the vilest and most deceitful of men—a wretch who scruples not to rend the most sacred bonds that nature forms asunder, while abominable hypocrisy puts the finish to his cruelty and baseness. The poor, infatuated girl, his victim, fancies it is a voice from heaven she hears, renounces father and kindred, for the sake of her unworthy choice,

choice, and is supported in the confirmed belief of the wisdom of her decision.'

" If I repented having drawn the admiral into a partial confession of the public cause of his disquietude, I still more regretted surprising him, in the passion of his grief, into the disclosure of a family secret unmeet for the ear of a stranger. Many stories I had heard of persons becoming by chance possessors of the secrets of the great, and marked from that moment with the melancholy distinction of their fear and hatred; and though the habitual magnanimity of the noble De-Cognigny prevented any fear of his acting towards me with injustice, I trembled to think that the moment of his spontaneous kindness was perhaps over, and that, henceforward, he would look upon his devoted Chastelar in the light of an artful spy, or a malignant censor.

" My fears on this occasion were ill-grounded: the admiral resumed—' My Louise is an instance, amongst many, how the
the

the most amiable dispositions, when not under due regulation, may contribute only to the misery of those who possess them. Her piety led her into the snare that now entangles her. Of a meek and serious disposition, books of devotion formed her favourite study; but she learned from them to entertain doubts of our right to separate from the corrupted church that held, so lately, undivided sway over Europe; and the result of her studies, seconded by the conversations of an artful priest, introduced by a fatal chance to her intimacy, was a determination to return, as it is called, to the bosom of the Holy Catholic Church. Though I wept at her resolution, I opposed it only by argument. God forbid that I, a champion of liberty of conscience, should attempt to force that of my child! but when the priest dared to tell me, that her conversion, as he impiously styled it, was only the beginning of a stronger and more decided vocation; when he came at length to the point, the aim and object, I

doubt not, of all his artifices, namely, that my Louise should take the veil, and bestow the fortune I had hoped to give her in dowry for some happy marriage, upon the convent to which he belonged—then indeed the self-possession which, in common cases, is my support, wholly deserted me; and when the monster announced, with tearless eyes, that he had stolen from me the duty, the affection of my child, had won away to the cause of bigotry and superstition her very soul, the stroke was too much for my boasted equanimity. I concealed my convulsed countenance with my hand, from the malicious triumph of his penetrating glance, and—"This is too cruel!" burst in involuntary exclamation from my oppressed and miserable heart. . .

... She has now spent some time at the convent, that is ultimately to be her tomb. A month she grants to the prayers of her afflicted father, ere she immures herself for ever, and I expect her now from day to day; but small comfort have I in store in

in the prospect of the society of my once sweet obedient Louise. Ere she last left me, mistaken zeal and gloomy bigotry had altered her nature. Forgetting the pure precepts of religion, that enjoins honour to parents above all things, and that declares to obey is better than to sacrifice, my daughter could think herself innocent, nay, more than innocent, praiseworthy, in leaving me to solitude, in order to follow up the gloomy practices of an ascetic devotion. It is, you well know, the spirit of our reformed religion, to discountenance the immoralities of the times, and few could boast a household where innocent cheerfulness was more fitly mingled with becoming gravity than mine. But Louise turned from the sound of music and the dance as sinful, condemned the conversation and assemblage of friends upon the most innocent occasions, and in short, proved herself a complete convert to those outrageous devotees, who, by converting all the ordinary pleasures and business of

life into crimes, may lead the ignorant and unthinking at length to conclude, that crimes are not worse than the pursuit of business or pleasure. Her lute, my late delight, is laid aside. She holds it sinful to cultivate the mental faculties with which the Almighty goodness profusely endowed her. In short, the convent of N—— has gained a proselyte, and I have lost a once duteous, lovely, and most affectionate child.'

"As he pronounced these last words, the admiral sighed profoundly, leaned his head upon the table, and seemed absorbed in painful contemplation. I heard him with an interest and emotion even beyond what my strong attachment to his person justified, and learned, with a satisfaction altogether unaccountable, that the fair object of his bitter censure was so soon expected. With the vanity and presumption of youth, I flattered myself, that if I could once attract the notice of mademoiselle de Coligny, I might yet be the means
of

of winning her from her severe resolution, and restoring to my beloved master his much-regretted child.

“ My being myself a Roman Catholic, would, I imagined, give weight to my arguments, when I should urge that she had in the world ties and duties more sacred than those of a life of solitude and contemplation.

“ A slight bustle throughout the household announced, the next day, the arrival of mademoiselle de Coligny. The admiral, I knew, would represent me most favourably to her. I had served near his person in several sharp rencounters, had lately attended him with indefatigable solicitude through a severe and tedious sickness, and was distinguished by his favour from all the other gentlemen of the household.

“ Notwithstanding all this, it was very possible that mademoiselle de Coligny might refuse to hold any communication with me ; and, indeed, when I considered

her inveterate bigotry, her unamiable presumption, and spiritual pride, I hardly knew whether I wished to see her or not. *Her* life was quite secluded, therefore, as soon as decorum permitted, I sent to her, to say, that the sieur de Chastelar, a gentleman of the household, who had the honour of her father's confidence, was most desirous of tendering his homage and respect to her, at such time as he should not be considered to intrude.

" My doubts were soon at an end, for the answer to my message was returned, that as soon as mademoiselle de Coligny had concluded the spiritual exercise of the evening, she would be willing to receive the homage of the sieur de Chastelar.

" Though I could not help thinking there was some ostentation in this parade of piety, the manner in which this message was delivered struck me as a favourable omen. A beautiful little page was the messenger, and his sweet, though infantine

faint features, seemed the surety for a smiling reception.

“ At the appointed hour I was ushered into a solemn and faintly-lighted room; but how were all my preconceived ideas put to flight!—I had pictured to myself mademoiselle de Coligny in a forbidding dress, with a countenance to suit the repulsive austerity of her manners and mind. When I looked up I seemed to stand in the presence of an angel, and a voice of silver melody completed the resistless power of this heavenly maid. Her beauty was of the style that limners fancy, when, in their happiest moods, they would picture a vestal, a Madonna, or a saint. Her downcast, dovelike eyes, expressed the extreme of modesty and sensibility; and her bright hair, that played like a glory around a seraph's head, was only confined by the white novice's veil. A flowing robe of white, and a cross of ebony, seemed in harmony with the pure attractions of a

form and face destined for ever to remain unrivalled.

‘ You have heard I am a sad stubborn girl, no doubt, monsieur de Chastelar,’ said she, in a voice of touching sweetness, ‘ and thought perhaps that even to your poor request I should play the perverse one, and refuse the boon you craved; but *they* know not my heart who thus represent me. Whosoever has served my father faithfully and truly, is dear in my eyes. Alas, how soon will he need the utmost of their faithful services!’

“ Here she paused in emotion, and in fancy I filled up her sweet silence with the pangs of a filial heart, divided between love of her father and of God.

“ The conversation of mademoiselle de Coligny, during the whole of this interview, confirmed the favourable impression produced by this exordium. Her mind appeared originally the seat of all that was amiable, good, and tender, and I execrated the perverse zeal of the monks that had turned

turned such feelings from the channel in which they naturally should have flowed.

“The admiral seconded my wish to expostulate with mademoiselle de Coligny; any thing that presented him the remotest chance of recovering his darling child, was eagerly seized on by him.

“By falling in with mademoiselle de Coligny’s austere tastes, I by degrees accustomed her to the daily sight of me.—She was wont to call me her ‘good Chastelar,’ and we had frequent conversations upon religious topics, with no other witnesses than the little page, and a young girl, who had been rescued from misfortune, and educated by mademoiselle de Coligny’s pious care.

“As the month, however, drew near to a conclusion, these conversations, in which I hoped that I had made some progress in shaking the resolution of Louise, assumed a more gloomy turn, and at the conclusion of them she would generally sigh, and say—‘Adieu, my good Chastelar; you will

soon be left alone to console my father.' It was within two days of her departure. I had latterly suffered during these interviews more than I could express; these words used to lacerate my heart. Without premeditation, without the smallest design, I put one knee to the ground, and raising the hem of her robe to my lips, exclaimed—' Ah, mademoiselle! why should we not remain here together to console him?'

"She was more agitated than I had any reason to expect. Some tears fell from her lovely eyes; then suddenly repulsing me with a degree of horror in her looks, she said, in a tremulous voice—' Tempter! would you have me grant to the acquaintance of a month, that which I have refused to an idolized father's tears?'

"Now I see you were both fairly in love," interrupted Rose, with a singular expression of satisfaction in her looks. "Go on, dear father, pray—what did you rejoin to mademoiselle de Coligny?"

"So

"So you are a doctor in the science of love, my little Rose," said the sire, with a faint attempt to smile; "but expect not a detailed account of what farther passed from me; ill would it befit me to amuse your ears with a romance. I only relate what is necessary to the right understanding of my sad tale. Suffice it to say—the discovery that I was dear to this lovely and pious maiden, was dashed with the bitterest remorse. I considered myself, however innocent in my first intentions, as the base violator of the confidence reposed in me by her venerable father. I reflected on her illustrious birth and ample fortune, opposed to my mediocrity, and awaited the severe and just reproaches of the admiral, for I doubted not his penetration had discovered the truth.

"I received a summons to attend the admiral in his closet. I obeyed with the fear and trembling of a culprit about to appear in the presence of his judge. Never did I see the venerable Coligny.

wear an aspect more composed, more dignified.

‘ So you have gone beyond my wishes, I find,’ he said, with a deliberate voice; ‘ and when I urged you to influence the judgment, you have stolen the affections of my child.’

“ I knew not what this singular exordium was to lead to. In a moment his eye, which had been fixed sternly on me, resumed its benignant expression.—‘ Fear nothing, my son,’ he said; ‘ your crime is excusable, and my imprudence is not. I should not have admitted a Chastelar to an intimate intercourse with a maiden, so dangerous even in her perverseness as my poor child. You could not choose but love, and your aspiring love shall not be so fatal to you as such a passion was to your ill-fated uncle, if it indeed be constant to the death, tender and true.’

“ I fell at his feet, and interrupted my venerated master with some broken expressions, indicative of my profound sense
of

of his goodness, and my ardent desire to live and die in his service, and that of his lovely daughter.

‘ Rise, Chastelar,’ said the admiral; ‘ the sacrifice is not so great as you imagine. In giving you my daughter, I do not consider her as mademoiselle de Coligny, surrounded by a number of titled pretenders, but as a dear child, snatched by your means (however different the manner from that which I at first proposed to myself) from the living tomb that would have shut her out from my society and affection. I bow to the mysterious ways of Providence, and accept with gratitude the mitigated draught of pleasure and disappointment prepared for me. I was too proud of my child, whose beauty I thought entitled her to rank with princesses. Now, if she does not increase the splendour of my house by a great alliance, still she will not be lost to my affection. Her children may reproduce in her fond father’s heart the illusions that her own
infant

infant beauty and docility once created ; and (should not a violent death anticipate her pious cares) her hand may close my weary eyes.'

" This affecting anticipation of his tragical end, which in all his hours of gloom haunted my beloved master's mind, accompanied the tender of his daughter, and mingled with the most transporting moment of my life sufficient of bitterness to remind me, like the admonition of the slave in the Roman Triumph, that I was but mortal."

" And so you, my father, were the son-in-law of Coligny, and you have remained content in this obscure valley ?" exclaimed Rose.

" I request," replied the sire de Chastellar, his voice trembling with emotion, " that you will not again interrupt me. Too soon will the events I have to relate unfold themselves; and once related, may I never be summoned to so painful a task again."

" As

"As soon as our emotions had on both sides in some degree subsided, the admiral said to me, resuming his wonted dignified serenity—'But, Chastelar, although I am content to wave for my child the possession of riches and honours, I am answerable to myself and to society to bestow her on none below the rank of a gentleman. Your blood I know to be pure and unmingled; but you must be ready to produce proofs of the antiquity and respectability of your family, to reply to the prejudices of *mine*. Hasten therefore, and procure your family documents, your letters patent, and *titres de noblesse*, before Louise hears another word of love. I am satisfied,' he added, with a smile, 'that I could not have invented a surer means of quickening the diligence of a lover's return.'

"The admiral judged rightly. Had the current of events corresponded with the ardour of my wishes, the same day would have witnessed my departure from
his

his house, and my return. But unexpected obstacles presented themselves. The head of our family, who was possessed of most of the papers and documents, had been taken prisoner in one of our civil contests, and it was not certain whether he was living or dead. After a tedious and fruitless search, I discovered he had recently expired, but found it impossible to regain the papers, which had been probably pillaged, in the place of more valuable booty. My brother Aimar I knew possessed copies of them. Anxious, as far as was in my power, to approve myself worthy of Louise de Coligny, I hastened to procure them from him ; but he was then attending one of the progresses of the court, and another tedious-delay intervened before I could obtain possession of these papers, the necessary preliminaries to all my expected happiness. The business of examining, verifying, and transcribing them, was then to be gone through ; and a period of three months had

had elapsed before I was able to return to the spot where all my hopes were centered. As, independent of my love for his daughter, the house of admiral de Coligny had long been my home, I did not think it necessary to announce my arrival. I hastened to pay my duty to the admiral. He received me with a countenance, mild, but mingled with sadness. I requested permission to approach his daughter.—‘You will find her in the banqueting-room,’ he said: ‘but why, Chastelar, did you neglect her so long?’

“These words struck a cold damp upon my heart: I had transmitted to Louise an account of the delays that had frustrated my intentions, although no clerk like Aymar; and that it cost me more trouble to pen so long a letter, than to have unhorsed a rival in the ring. This letter, in those troublesome times, she had no doubt not received. I could not, however, stay to justify myself: my whole heart was with Louise. The admiral looked as if he

he wished to call me back ; but his voice, that I must perforce have obeyed, was silent, and I proceeded, unobstructed, to my doom.

“ A number of friends and relations surrounded my mistress, who seemed to be in the midst of a family party ; but I noticed only one figure—it was that of a cavalier, who leaned over her chair, as she was employed in fastening a string to her lute. Accustomed as I had been to all the noble and brilliant youth of the court of Navarre, one glance at this overpowering stranger was sufficient to convince me that he far surpassed them all. He was dressed in the most magnificent fashion of the day—a style which would have oppressed a figure less rich and majestic : but in all his movements there was a dignified and commanding grace, while in his countenance and features there was such inexpressible sweetness and benignity, that, great as were the reasons for my enmity, I, even I, felt influenced in a degree

gree by this mysterious attraction—a circumstance you will the less wonder at, when I tell you, *that* gracious countenance, afterwards, for a moment, arrested the uplifted steel of the assassin, and inspired those with remorse and pity who finally compassed his tragical death. For this was the celebrated Teligny—but I must not anticipate. Louise seemed engaged in a lively disputation; she however noticed my entrance with an inclination of the head, and her smile of accustomed sweetness. She presented the stranger to me as monsieur de Teligny, better known among her sex, and in the memoirs of the times, under the name of ‘*L’Amiable Teligny*’; an appellation which marked that, although acknowledged to be the handsomest man in France, his wonderful beauty was the least of his powers of pleasing.—‘Monsieur de Chastelar,’ said she, turning with vivacity to me, ‘we were engaged in a dispute worthy of the ancient courts of love: which is the gallant
most

most worthy of his mistress, say you? he who, to prove his unlimited confidence in her faith, wanders away from her, and leaves her to neglect; or he who, with assiduous, and perhaps importunate attention, follows, and loses not sight of her for a moment?

“I felt all the painfulness of my position, and how Louise had misconstrued my enforced absence: but despair gave me courage, and I answered with readiness, though in a somewhat faltering voice—‘Lady, to reply in the manner of the *arrêts* of the *Cours d’Amour*, I should say that the confiding lover loves much more fervently, although the assiduous one may love more wisely.’

‘Then I should pronounce for him who loves wisely, in preference to the extravagant lover,’ said Teligny. ‘How does the lady decide?’

“I saw plainly that her decision would pronounce my doom—absence, apprehended neglect, and the transcendant endowments

ments of her new adorer, united to the warm representation of all her friends, excepting her father, in favour of a lover possessed of all those advantages of rank and fortune which I wanted, had banished from the ductile mind of Louise her short-lived preference for me. I must in justice add, that monsieur de Teligny, being himself a Calvinist, had won her back to the religious opinions of her family, a service which I should not have been able to perform, and one which rendered him in some sort a more suitable match for her. I had confined my endeavours to abating her distaste of the world, and reviving her love for her kindred and friends; and my success exhibited another proof how vain are the wishes of man. I had sowed, that another might reap. I had awakened her heart to feeling, and another had snatched away from me the precious prize. Yet, notwithstanding these sad reflections, pride, and a proper feeling of respect for myself; prevented me from appearing at once to quail

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quail before my dazzling rival. I felt that I was not Teligny's inferior in love; and making an effort to appear gallant and gay, while my heart was bursting with grief, I resumed—'There *does* exist among the poems of the Troubadours a lay that expresses my poor thoughts, far better than *I* could utter them in such a bright assemblage: it touches on the various crimes that may be imputed to a lover, and at the same time points out how he may stand excused.'

"Louise expressed a wish to hear it, and Teligny remarked that poetry was an attribute of my family. Flattered with the hope—vain hope! that I yet might touch her heart, which would comprehend, if not wholly lost to me, the mystic meaning of the lay, I began it without farther hesitation: it was the 'Apology of Love,' that you, my Blanche, have often praised. Let me hear it once more, and it will enable me to recover breath to continue my narrative."

Willing

Willing to sooth him, Blanche instantly complied, and sang the following words to her guitar :—

LAY OF CHASTELAR.

Fair ladies, pity the archer boy,
Who, wandering blind and young,
The syren, Error, may oft decoy
To paths of wile and wrong,
But, oh, repentant, may he prove
Your hearts relenting, kind;
For if love hath faults, the faults of love
From love an excuse should find.

Now Fancy's bright, delusive fires,
Allure the lover's eye
From her who woke his first desires,
Who woke his earliest sigh.
But long from her he cannot rove,
The empress of his mind;
And if love hath faults, the faults of love
From love an excuse should find.

Now

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Now Jealousy, with ruthless dart,
Provokes the youth to dare
Accuse the mistress of his heart,
And plunge her in despair.
But, fiercest when reproaches move,
Sly Cupid laughs behind ;
Then if love hath faults, the faults of love
From love an excuse should find.

Perhaps to visit foreign strands
The wanderer quits his home,
The spoils to win from conquered lands,
May tempt the knight to roam ;
But still the bonds that Beauty wove
Around his heart are twined ;
And if love hath faults, the faults of love
From love an excuse should find.

But if nor falsehood, change, nor pride,
Nor aught deserving blame,
Should tempt him from his fair one's side,
But DUTY's sacred name,
Oh, should not every doubt remove
That clouds his charmer's mind,
When if love *had* faults, the faults of love
From love an excuse would find ?

The

The sire de Chastelar resumed—"Trembling, I raised mine eyes to those of my ladye-love. The first glance of *hers* convinced me that I had nothing to hope. Oh, what a calm and cold serenity there was in the freezing look of that eye of blue; it told that passion was departed for ever. I loved with all the fire and force of a Chastelar, and would, at that moment, like my wretched namesake, gladly have spilt my life's last drop upon a scaffold to obtain one kind look from *her*! but it would not be.

"From her noble-minded father I received some compensation. Anxious to exonerate himself from the charge of having attempted to influence his daughter, he even condescended to add, that however importuned by his family, he would never give his consent to her becoming the bride of Teligny, if I judged fit to maintain my prior claim to her hand.

"During the conversation in which he expressed these sentiments, the dignity of

his aspect, the sincerity apparent in all the looks and words of my revered protector, penetrated to my inmost heart, and imparted a strange colouring of satisfaction to this hour of mortal grief; but I saw at once the only path that honour pointed out to me to pursue.—‘It was the favour of mademoiselle de Coligny,’ I replied, ‘that alone raised me to the height in which I dared to appear her suitor. *That* kindness gone, far be it from me to avail myself of a father’s voice to enforce the unequal tie. No, great sir, sufficient grace is it for me to have been one moment esteemed worthy to be the son-in-law of Coligny; that proud remembrance shall be laid to my grateful heart, to still its murmurs and make me scorn to grieve.’

“With Louise de Coligny I had still a painful scene to go through. Influenced by relatives, and rather weak than blamable, she could not bear that we should part in anger, and with fickle woman’s wayward feelings, seemed anxious to pre-
serve

serve the esteem of the man whom she had ceased to love. She tried, by various arguments, to reconcile me to this change; but the sincerity of my passion rejected them with scorn.—‘Cease, Louise!’ I exclaimed; ‘had you continued mine, you would have found your poor Chastelar rich at least in love—richer perhaps than this all-gifted stranger: but that is over, and I renounce my claim.—Not to *him*, but to *you*, I make the renunciation. May you, as the bride of Teligny, enjoy every happiness that the world can give! and may no reverse of fortune ever make you call in vain on the name of *him* whom you have consigned to lasting wretchedness!’ She looked irresolute, and seemed inclined to say more, but I rushed from her presence, with the poor satisfaction of having made her feel that she alone was the offender; and made my arrangements to quit, for a time at least, a service that her cruelty had made intolerable.

“Peace was now proclaimed between

the two crowns. My presence in the train of Coligny could be for a while dispensed with, and I easily obtained permission to absent myself from the festivities that took place when monsieur de Teligny became the son-in-law of the admiral. My leave of absence was prolonged ; and I visited my brother, and made a tour of the provinces, in hopes that change of scene would work a cure in my heart ; *that* cure was destined to be wrought in the Glass Valley.

“ My brother, whose erratic genius and romantic turn brought him into contact with various classes of people, had often praised to me the institutions of that singular society, and the industry, frugality, and high spirit of honour, that distinguished the members that composed it.

“ I determined to make an excursion into the valley of Lorraine, and was charmed with the frankness and simplicity of the inhabitants. It was not long before I formed a particular intimacy with the sire de l'Aubépine, and this intimacy was cemented

mented by the innocent attractions of Rose, his only daughter."

The sire de Chastelar paused, drew the blooming Rose more fondly towards his bosom, and dropping a tear upon her cheek, proceeded—"The health of the sieur de l'Aubépine was declining—the labours of the glass-house were beginning to be too much for him. He talked freely to me of his anxieties respecting the innocent Rose; and to a man undeceived like me in all the promises of ambition, nothing could be more gratifying than the arrangement he proposed—that I should supply to Rose the place of her dying father, and applying for admission into all the privileges of the valley, succeed to the possession of de l'Aubépine's abode, and the small domain surrounding it.

"It was returning from one of these conversations, soothing, but necessarily mournful to the mind, that I found a letter from the admiral de Coligny, summoning me, as one of the gentlemen that com-

posed his train, to join him forthwith at Paris.

“The chiefs of the Protestant party were hastily assembling there, on occasion of the nuptials of the young king of Navarre with the French king’s sister, Marguerite de Valois; and the admiral was desirous of appearing there with a train suitable, in number and magnificence, to his own rank, and the dignity of his young master.

“There was no contravening this summons, yet I obeyed it with unfeigned reluctance. I was satisfied, if I did not exult in my present lot, and a dark presentiment of future evils overshadowed with gloom the prospect of a change.

“There are those who prefer a favourite and habitual sadness to a tumultuous and uncertain joy.

“It was now above two years in all since I had bidden adieu to the splendid household of my protector, and I thought I had also bidden adieu to all violent emotions

tions of joy and sorrow. I now found in this unforeseen event, a sudden awakening of the heart, a renewal of feelings of passion and pleasure, of visions of love and glory for ever flown, of transporting hopes and agonizing disappointments, that were calculated to bring any thing but satisfaction to my mind.

“It was with sincere regret, and many promises of a speedy return, never more to separate, that I parted from my gentle Rose; and when she withdrew from my sight, I felt that I had lost my better angel.

“I found my ancient master in the highest spirits. His gloomy presentiments had given way before the sight of the happiness of his united children; and the birth of a grandchild had completed his felicity. He told me in confidence that he had never felt his heart so free and buoyant. The kindness that the court now demonstrated towards the oppressed Hugonots, filled his mind with the hap-

piest auguries of future tranquillity and conciliation; while the friendship that the princes expressed personally towards himself, divested his mind of those salutary fears that had, till now, kept him on the alert at the bare semblance of danger.—‘Rejoice with me, my good Chastelar,’ said the excellent man; ‘all those who sought my life are now the most anxious to preserve it. The young king himself—(oh, royal tiger, thus to lie in wait for, and deceive age and wisdom!)—always gives me the name of “father,” and consults me upon every occasion: the enemy that has so long pursued me thirsts no more for my blood, seeing me so ramparted round with royal friends, that he durst not think of harming me.’

“This enemy was Henry duke of Guise, who, ever since the assassination of his father, duke Francis, at the siege of Orleans, had persisted in accusing the admiral as the instigator of the deed—a deed of such atrocity, that the whole tenour of my beloved

loved master's life was in the most complete contradiction to it.

“ The preparations for the young king's marriage went on rapidly, and the deluded Hugonots were dazzled with the magnificence of the court. Three queens contributed at once by their presence to give it elegance and splendour. The majestic beauty of the queen dowager, Catherine de Medicis, her striking figure, affable manners, and prepossessing countenance, would have still obtained for her a considerable degree of admiration, if she had not been totally eclipsed by the youthful charms of her daughter, the destined queen of Navarre, the most beautiful creature mine eyes ever beheld, and the most fatal gift to the Protestants. If Marguerite de Valois was like a young Venus drawn in the chariot of conquest, Elizabeth, daughter of the emperor Maximilian the Second, and consort to the reigning monarch of France, resembled a Hebe, and attracted the homage of many a heart by

her retiring modesty and grace. What a group! what a scene of magnificence and pleasure suddenly burst upon my senses! how unlike the peaceful valley of Lorraine—its artless beauties and its simple joys!

“On this occasion I was presented to king Charles the Ninth, who was truly a printe of a majestic presence, although in all his inclinations singular and severe: the conversation of the ladies afforded him no delight—on the contrary, he passed whole days in hunting, on which occasions he would (like our old champion Roland at Roncevaux) constantly blow the horn himself—a barbarous and dangerous custom, which at length partly occasioned his death. When he returned from the chase, after enduring fatigue enough to exhaust any other man, his majesty was wont to recreate himself at some violent game of strength or address; and sometimes, in a guise less beseeming his rank, with labouring like a smith in fabricating
armour

armour at the forge—rest, food, and recreation, seemed alike indifferent to him. The only thing human in his disposition was a fondness for poetry and music—a fondness which my brother Aimar would tell you extenuates all his crimes.

“ Notwithstanding her affable manners, which were always easy, gay, and debonnaire, the queen-mother could not always conceal her maternal mortification at the contrast afforded by the noble qualities and winning deportment of her destined son-in-law, with the savage propensities of the king her son.

“ The young king of Navarre, who had just completed his nineteenth year, was universally acknowledged the most accomplished cavalier at court. His stature was noble and elegant, his eyes sweet and sparkling, and in his whole countenance and demeanour there was that indescribable something, which, bespeaking the heroic qualities of the soul, steals away that of others, even more than external beauty.

and

and grace. His countenance was the mirror of his mind, which exhibited a combination of the rarest and most estimable qualities. While the soldier idolized him for his heroism in the field, he was equally acceptable to the courtier for his companionable gaiety and grace, and to the ladies for the spirited and chivalrous gallantry with which he devoted himself to their cause. Little was it suspected, that the beauteous Margaret, his destined bride, was perhaps the only one among them whom Henry regarded with coldness and aversion: the Hugonots, on the contrary, considered this marriage as the bond of permanent union betwixt their party and that of the court. Every one appeared devoted to pleasure; and yet there were signs sufficient (had not an inscrutable Providence blinded their eyes) to have warned them of the impending catastrophe — the queen of Navarre died suddenly, not without strong suspicions of poison—an attempt had been made upon
the

the life of the admiral; and notwithstanding the loud expressions of indignation from the king, it was suspected that he connived at the assassin's escape.

"Struck with these and several other corroborating circumstances, the most prudent of the Hugonot chiefs began gradually to withdraw themselves from Paris; and when pressed to return to the court, replied—*'That they found the air of the suburbs agreed better with their constitutions, and that of the fields would agree better still.'*

"There was something in these mysterious expressions, in their gradual and silent withdrawing from the vicinity of the court, which argued a vague suspicion of some dreadful calamity near at hand, and many circumstances concurred to make their words and actions appear to me indescribably awful. There was a mysterious reserve among the wiser Protestants, a breathless looking out and waiting for some unknown and decisive event; it was like

like the closeness of the air; the melancholy of the animal world, and the stillness of nature, previous to the bursting of the thunderstorm.

"Meanwhile nothing could abate the cheerfulness of my beloved master, nor his infatuated confidence in the perfidious promises of the court. When he asked a friend, who recommended caution, what it was he possibly had to fear, 'The caresses of a reconciled enemy,' was his adviser's reply. Impressive words! which the horrors a few succeeding days brought forth rendered awfully prophetic. De Rosny too, the discerning and intelligent father of the present favourite of Navarre, was said, upon the first proposal of his master's going to the capital, to have observed—'That if those nuptials were celebrated at Paris, the bridal favours would be crimson!'"

The sire de Chastelar's narrative had continued long; the last gleams of lingering day had for some time departed, and the

the moon was riding high in the cloudless heavens. Apprehensive of the effects of his prolonging his discourse in this sad, solemn hour, both the girls affectionately pressed him to rest, and retire within the cottage. The sire de Chastelar felt the justness of their recommendation, and promised early on the morrow to resume the thread of his sad story.

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1826.

HENRY THE FOURTH OF FRANCE.

.....

CHAPTER I.

.....

In secret we met—

In silence I grieve,

That thy heart could forget,

Thy spirit deceive.

If I should meet thee,

After long years,

How should I greet thee?

With silence and tears.

BYRON.

CONCLUSION OF THE HISTORY OF RAOUL DE CHASTELAR.

“ I HAVE not yet adverted to my
necessarily-renewed meeting with ma-

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B

dame

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dame de Teligny. The young king of Navarre and the princess Marguerite of France were affianced at the Louvre by the cardinal de Bourbon, and the next day the august ceremony was performed by the same prelate at the church of Notre Dame. On that day, Henry of Navarre and Marguerite de Valois appeared to me (but *one*) the goodliest pair in France—alas, the while! that I should have to add, and the least loving! What needs it to recite the feasts and braveries which waited upon that most illustrious, most unhappy marriage! I will only describe the *last*, in which I bore a part. The Salle de Bourbon was the scene of action. It had been converted, for the occasion, into an exact representation of Paradise and the Infernal Regions.”

“How do you know it was exact, papa?” interrupted Rose.

The sire de Chastelar was a little embarrassed by this question; however, he proceeded—

proceeded—" Divided from the Inferno by a river, and situated to the right of the hall, was the earthly Paradise; the entrance to which was defended by three knights, armed at all points, who combated for the king and his two royal brothers, the dukes of Anjou and Alençon. To the left were the infernal regions, from whence arose a confusion of sights and sounds truly lamentable and diabolical.

"The paradise I have described to the right served as the entrance to the Elysian Fields, which offered indeed a glorious sight, being represented by the most delicious garden, covered with odoriferous flowers and shrubs; and above was seen the empyrean, in all its splendour, which was represented by a great wheel —"

"Represented by a great wheel!" interrupted Blanche in her turn; "the glorious empyrean sky! Oh, how little — how absurd!"

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"You would not have thought it so, my dears, if you had seen it," resumed the sire de Chastelar; "neither pains nor cost were spared to render every thing complete. This wheel, or revolving sphere, was adorned with the twelve signs; and while it exhibited all the planets, sparkled also with an infinity of little stars, that shed a flood of radiance over the saloon, making of this solemn night a mimic day. But what were mine eyes reserved to see, more brilliant than the stars—more dazzling—more fatal? Twelve nymphs of surpassing beauty, crowned with chaplets, and habited in robes of glittering tissue, wandered in these enchanted shades. As, with her sister beauties, she lightly trod the emerald maze, I once more saw Louise de Coligny! Small time was there for sorrow, or joy, or recognition. Following the order of the night, I advanced, with a band of gentlemen, armed in the costume of the "*anciens preux*,"
and

and wearing in our scarves and ribbons the colours of Coligny, who, although not yet sufficiently recovered to take a share in the amusement, was yet anxious to prove the sincerity and singleness with which he trusted to the king's professions, by gracing the entertainment with the presence of his followers.

“ Our business in the drama of the night was to endeavour to make good our entrance into this earthly paradise, and then pursue the nymphs whom we saw in the Elysian Fields. This part of the masque excited breathless attention. While these bands of knights-errant, each led to the combat by the prince or lord whom he served, and whose colours he wore, exerted all their skill and address to attain this object, three knights successfully defended the gates of Paradise, and drove back all who attempted to force an entry. I singled out *one*, distinguished by his gorgeous armour and magnificent plumes ;

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the visor was but half closed, and I felt I could not be mistaken in the matchless features—it was indeed De Teligny. In vain I repeated that this was but a pastime—a mockery of war; illusion seemed to give place to reality, and the whole to be a bitter allegory, descriptive of my fate and fortunes. Again, as formerly, De Teligny stood between me and my ladye-love—again he stood, the dazzling but destructive angel that barred my entrance into Paradise. I rushed on him, animated by the most real desire to prevail. Teligny defended himself with the address and grace for which he was distinguished alike in all manly exercises. The judges of the spectacle took care that this mimic warfare should not be productive of serious consequences. At length the assailants were obliged to yield: one by one we were subdued—for such were the laws of the pageant. Demons leaped upon us from behind, and dragged us into the
abodes

shades of woe. Could fancy frame a device more suited to tear open the wounds of my heart? Yes—there wanted one finish to my sufferings, and it was not wanted long. The spectacle drew to a close; according to a preconcerted arrangement, the three knights of Paradise arose at the same moment, and sought the twelve nymphs, whom it was their pleasing duty to conduct from the Elysian Fields.

“From the irksome enclosure in which, with the other knights-errant, I was confined, I saw him who had severed my ladye-love and me, advance, secure and happy, and lead the bright Louise to a seat; I saw their mutual looks of love—I saw the mingled air of tenderness and triumph with which he gazed upon her—I saw (oh, sight more painful!) the beaming smile that rewarded his tenderness. A murmur of admiration resounded throughout the hall.—A new movement among the per-

8. HENRY FOURTH OF FRANCE.

formers apprized us that dancing was going to begin. The superb and graceful Teligny led his Louise to her place; and I then learned that the still-adoring husband had obtained, by special favour, the post of one of the three royal champions, that no other might approach and claim her hand.

“A ballet was now danced, composed of the three conquering chevaliers and the twelve houris of the garden; but though they all shone brilliant in beauty and youth, still Louise and her Teligny bore away the suffrage of all beholders. I checked my rebellious heart, as I saw them move in their glorious pride, and breathed a hasty prayer, that their felicity might be lasting, as it was perfect. And now a noise and bustle in our fantastic region announced the termination of the ball, and the release of the imprisoned chevaliers.

“A general combat was to close the amusements of the night. With eagerness

ness I rushed on the scene of action, anxious to give vent to the feelings that oppressed me. In the confusion of the fight, I welcomed every new opponent that presented himself, and far surpassed all present, in the spirit with which I counterfeited (was it counterfeited?) the rage of real war; lances were broken—armour rung—splinters of weapons flew about in all directions, and in the midst of this din my harassed mind recovered recollection and composure. As my strength became exhausted, the anguish of my heart abated. At length the combat closed; it ended with a terrible explosion, caused by trains of gunpowder, that were purposely set fire to; and soon nothing was left of these costly devices but noisome smoke, and the recollection of a night passed in folly, vanity, and violence. Such nights, my children, are not followed by quiet rest. I returned, lonely and musing, to the

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admiral's, whose residence was once more my temporary home.

"Sleep had scarcely closed mine eyes in brief and perturbed repose, when I was roused with a sudden shock by the distant report of a pistol. At first I deemed it only my fantasy repeating over again the sounds that had so often met mine ear during the revels of this tumultuous night; but the next moment convinced me the noise was real; and a shriek of horror, mixed with the noise of forcing doors open, and trampling of feet, was immediately followed by the cry that the admiral would be assassinated.

"To leap from my bed, hurry on my clothes, and seize my arms, were the actions of a moment. I flew into the apartment of the admiral. Great God! what a sight met my view! The room was filled with armed men—minions of the duke of Guise—French and Italian assassins, whom he had conducted to
their

their prey. In the midst of the ferocious group, the admiral, like some martyr resigned to meet his doom, leant, with his back against the wall, his hands raised in prayer, and his eyes turned towards heaven. Escape was impossible. He thought not of it; and the serene composure that marked his usual manner was now transformed into something of sublimity. Seeing that he stirred not, and as if struck with doubt by his statue-like silence, a ruffian with a drawn sword in his hand summoned him to answer if he was not Coligny?

‘The same,’ he replied; ‘young man, respect my hoary head!’

“The villain instantly stabbed him to the heart. I rushed upon him, thirsting to avenge my master’s blood. It was too late; unnumbered weapons were plunged into his yet breathing body, and, pierced with a multitude of wounds, the admiral expired. Hatred and revenge were not yet satisfied. It was a

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fearful sight to see the bloody Guise, then in the first flower of his brilliant and beautiful youth, but transformed into a fiend by the false idea that he was avenging a dearly-loved father's death, insist upon beholding with his own eyes the breathless and bleeding body of his guiltless foe. It was thrown to him from the window of the apartment into the court-yard below, where he awaited with impatience the completion of the deed of crime. I saw him stoop down over the mangled corse; I saw him with a savage joy gaze on the disfigured features of the dead, anxious to confirm with double certainty what was already beyond doubt; and finally order the victim of his furious passions from his sight. May he yet find, himself, a bloody grave!

“At this moment the great bell of the palace tolled. It was the morning of the twenty-fourth of August—of the festival of St. Barthélemi; the streets resounded

resounded with the sudden and horrible cry of—' Kill, kill, massacre the Hugonots!'

"A whole people, lured to the capital by the caresses and promises of a faithless court, were suddenly abandoned like sheep to the slaughter, and the monarch who had lured them by the bait of his detestable alliance was the planner and spectator of the scene.

"The number of wretches who fled, half naked and unarmed, to take refuge at the admiral de Coligny's; and who met from the guards now posted before his door the fate from which they vainly thought to escape, announced to us within that the work of destruction was begun. Up to this moment I had defended myself, and received but one slight wound.

"The horrible accounts that every moment were brought in, by convincing me that the murder of my benefactor was only the prelude to a long-planned
and

mid fearful tragedy, turned my thoughts from my own danger to that of others; and how dreadful was the image that took possession of my mind!

"All the Protestants were doomed to destruction. Amid the general massacre could Teligny escape?—Impossible! as the son-in-law of the admiral, as a Calvinist captain, he was equally obnoxious: and what would become of his wretched wife?

"Animated with the desire of saving her, even if I could not preserve her husband, the thought new strung my nerves with tenfold vigour. Love strong as death—love that purified, not that debased the soul, directed my arm, and won a passage for me through the assassin hosts.

"I traversed the streets, already wet and slippery with Protestant blood, and my heart heard but one voice amidst the shrieks and yells of agony that met my ear. The Catholics had adopted, to distinguish

distinguish themselves, a white scarf, tied around the arm, and I availed myself of this symbol to pass in safety to her for whose dear sake alone my life was worth my care. What sights met mine eyes in the way! What tigers are men when transported by the fury of savage passions! Pillage and destruction filled up the measure of crime; and revenge and murder stalked abroad unrestrained: the holiest ties of kindred were rent asunder—the most sacred feelings of nature were disregarded. A father was stabbed between his two sons, one of whom shared his fate, and the other only escaped by counterfeiting death. The guardian of a royal infant, De Briou, the venerable governor of the prince of Conti, struggled amidst a host of assassins, and in the false belief that such innocence could not appeal in vain, took the princely child in his arms, and held him up as a shield against their sacrilegious blows. Vain hope! neither
childhood

childhood nor age were sacred in the eyes of butchers inflamed with the madness of religious zeal; and De Briou was massacred in spite of the resistance of his royal pupil, who with tears and cries, and all the artless eloquence of infancy, extended his little hands as if to preserve his governor from the fatal stroke! Here you might see a bloody warrior rushing through the streets of Paris, mad with fury and carnage, and crying—'Let blood! let blood!' adding with infernal irony—'Bleeding is as good in the month of August as in May!' there you might hear an accursed priest urging on the work of havock, reminding the murderers of the Sicilian vespers, and exhorting them not even to spare the infant at the breast.

"In the midst of every sight and sound the most appalling to human nature, through streets half choked up with dead bodies, amidst the crash of ruins and the din of arms, the groans of
the

the murdered, and the imprecations of the murderers, I still speeded onward until I reached the spot where all my wishes centred. I arrived at the moment of the consummation of crime. Extended, a corpse, beautiful even in death, lay the superb and graceful Teligny—he whom I had beheld, but a few hours before, the delight of every eye. His death had been uncommonly cruel, and repeated wounds were visible upon his frame. The assassins who had been first employed to dispatch him, struck with a nameless expression of graciousness and sweetness that was diffused over his face, felt an unusual touch of pity, and others more stern were employed to complete the blow *. Around him

* The reluctance of the assassins to murder Teligny, and the cause of that reluctance, are facts, however singular, that happened as above related, and are mentioned in the Memoirs of Sully.—“ Charles, lord of Téligny, in Rouergue, Montreuil, &c. married to Louise de Coligny : he had something so sweet and amiable in his countenance, that at the massacre of St. Bartholomew,

him, what a group met my view! Pale, dishevelled, seated on the ground, Louise hung over the inanimate remains of Teligny: her long hair, now neglected, fell in loose masses over his pale corpse. Her daughter, in an agony of infantine affright, clasped her firmly round the neck, and hid her face in her mother's bosom; but that wretched mother, given entirely to her grief, seemed insensible to the little clinging embrace. The child, on the contrary, too young to understand the sad spectacle of death, seemed more alive to present danger; and gazing on me with eyes dilated by terror, loosed her hold, and with pale looks, and shrieking sobs, extended her little hands towards me, as if to implore my protection. Alas! she could not have made an appeal more forcible. I approached

those persons who were first sent to assassinate him, stopped as in suspense, and had not resolution enough to strike the blow."—*Notes to the Memoirs of Sully*, Vol. I. pages 18 and 19.

approached her unfortunate mother, and endeavoured to persuade her of the necessity of flight. But she gazed on me with unaltered eye, and turned not from her melancholy charge. Affliction had shaken her sweet reason in its seat, and she had but an imperfect consciousness of what was passing around. Scarcely aware of this, I renewed my solicitations, and attempted with gentle force to take the infant from her arms. The endeavour to separate her from her child restored in some degree her recollection. Expression returned to her glazed and faded eye, and with it a look of recognition that repaid me for all I had endured.

“ Once more I heard her sweet voice, and she murmured—‘ Oh, Chastelar!—faithful unto death!—tender and true—I deserved not this!’

‘ Make not my zeal ineffectual then,’ I frantically exclaimed; ‘ I can protect you against the murderers. Fly!—fear
not

not to trust yourself to me with this precious infant. Fly, Louise—fly!

“ She shook her head with an expression of mournful but determined resolution.—‘ What, fly with you, and leave *him* here?’ said she, pointing to the bloody corpse. ‘ No, no, Chastelar, never, never! But why left you my father?—Oh, my poor father!—the bloodhounds must have ere this tracked you!’

“ A look I could not command informed her of the sad fate that had overwhelmed the admiral, and that duty as well as inclination now bound me to her and *hers* alone.

‘ What!’ she cried—‘ the old man gone too!—could they not have pity on his grey hairs? Then, Chastelar, protect—protect my child!’ She sunk down beside the body of her husband. The affrighted child relaxed her trembling hold. I approached her. Louise was no more.

“ I now

"I now remarked some blood gouts on her garment. With eagerness I searched for the sacrilegious wound. She was unhurt. The wretched mother had been saved from bodily harm by the firm grasp of her little daughter, and the blood that flowed upon her was from a slight wound inflicted by the assassins on the left side of the infant's neck. Even *they*, when they could not separate the mother and child, recoiled from their fiend-like task, and thus had the child nearly saved her parent; but grief had snapped the strings of life, and the victim expired without a blow—without a wound."

The two girls, who during this fearful narrative had clung closer around the sire de Chastelar, now threw themselves into his arms, while Rose exclaimed—"Oh, father, that scar!—that child whom you saved from the massacre was Blanche—my Blanche; but my sister only in name."

"It

“ It was ; and now the painful confession of my fault begins. The last expressions of her mother, her solemn words of regret, her last adjuration, all seemed to justify me in my own eyes for never more separating myself from all that remained to me of the woman I had so fondly, so vainly loved. True, Blanche was also the child of Teligny, of the preferred, the idolized Teligny—he for whom she had poured forth her life, as the last seal of love ; but she looked at me with the eyes of Louise, she seemed to seek with confidence my protecting bosom, and I internally took a vow that she should be to me as a daughter, and should never separate from me more. I had an asylum—an humble one, it is true—to it I fled, from the horrible scene of streets filled with human victims, while the waters of the river ran purple with their blood.

“ When the fury of persecution abated, I sought not the relations of
Teligny.

Teligny, to restore my voluntary charge—those of Coligny were proscribed. Blanche I chose to consider as a precious treasure, bequeathed to me by my adored mistress, for my consolation—a sacred relic, rescued from the arms of buried love, and purchased at the expence of blood and tears, as uniting in her person all that remained of the master I had most venerated, the woman I had most loved.

“ I have now confessed my crime—that was the utmost extent of it. It was in retirement that I first learned the infamous proceedings, prompted by powerless malice, against my beloved master's remains.—Oh, Coligny—oh, my master, they have made thy habitation desolate! but it is in vain that they would try to extinguish the memory of thy virtues; they may veil thy portrait, but can they efface thy serene and venerable countenance from the faithful hearts on which it is engraven for ever?—

ever?—they may deface thy statues, but there is a monument erected to thee more durable than marble. Ages hereafter shall execrate the tyranny that brought thee to thy fate, and ages, that shall only darken the die of thy enemies' crimes, shall see thy fame rise up purer and brighter on the buoyant stream of time."

"And of what pretext did the court avail itself," asked Blanche, with a calm and unusually dignified air, "for treating my grandfather with such unprecedented severity?"

"The pretext, my dear (for tyranny never wants one), was, that the admiral had laid a plan to exterminate the royal family, and to place the prince of Condé upon the throne; but the real reason for this base attack upon the admiral's memory, was an attempt to throw some colour of justice over the shameful facility with which a sanguinary monarch had permitted a prince as blood-thirsty to gratify

gratify the feelings of private vengeance, in the murder of one of the most upright and virtuous of men.

“ In the mortal grief that oppressed my soul during the transactions of these heavy times, the ordinary forms of mourning seemed to me insufficient to express my affliction for the fate of my beloved master ; I neglected my apparel, I suffered my beard to grow, and I know not to what excesses I might have been led, by the grief it was my only solace to feed and nourish, if I had not been recalled to myself by perceiving the affright and repugnance my aspect produced in my beloved Blanche.

“ I then recollected also that I had other duties to fulfil. The gentle Rose de l'Aubepine had drooped too long under my seeming neglect, and all of my affections that were not entombed with the sacred dead of right belonged to her. I found her suffering under the additional privation of a beloved father's

loss—a privation which, although some time anticipated, was not the less severely felt. I made a vow to supply to that lovely maiden the place of the father, friend, and guardian, she had lost, and during the time she lived (a time too short for my happiness), I kept my vow. The health of my beloved wife was undermined at the time I married her, and she survived but a few months the birth of my little Rose.

“ *Then*, Rose and Blanche, my children, my consolation, the thought in which I had long indulged, of uniting you in the bands of companionship and sisterhood assumed consistency. The relations of De Teligny, if any survived, believed Blanche to have perished in the massacre; those of Coligny, although restored, as far as possible, to their honours, have never made themselves known by any inquiry. To preserve in her a relic of my beloved master, and (shall I own it?) dearer mistress, to
shelter

shelter her from the storms that at first pursued her family in the retirement I had myself embraced, appeared to me motives sufficient, and I gave her the name of daughter—that name which she already held in my love.—But, Blanche, you have grown up lovely, and noble in deportment, reminding me at once of both your parents—you are fitted to adorn a court; can you then forgive the innocent deceit that had for its object to shelter you from harm? and if, in the various chances of the world, you should resume your former rank, will you remember, with tenderness, the humble guardian of the valley of Lorraine?”

“My more than father!” exclaimed Blanche, throwing herself at his feet, “I know no parental care but yours—I never, but with life, can cease to bear in mind the love, the tenderness, you have shewn me. No, my father; what-

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ever be my future lot, you must ever
have the first place in the grateful
Blanche's heart!"

CHAP.

CHAPTER II.
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How slow for her the steps of Time must fall !  
 She looks through the casement's chequer'd glass;  
 The clouds drive by, and she watches them pass  
 Over the city wall.  
 She has sparkles of joy which soon subside,  
 Then she weeps till her soul is satisfied,  
 And then is tranquil, or seems to be so,  
 But ever in love, if she seem it or no.

GÖTTE's *Faust*, translated by lord F. L. GOWER.

WHILE the sire de Chastelar was thus tracing the course of the past, and flattering (vainly flattering) himself with the hope that he had cast anchor at length in a harbour, tranquil, although not to be envied by the happy, a cloud hung over the valley of Lorraine, which threatened with the most serious evils the destinies of its inhabitants.

Henry, king of Navarre, who had assembled his forces at Rochelle, was endeavouring to effect a junction with the army sent out early in the spring by the Protestant princes of Germany to his relief.

The young duke of Lorraine was connected by marriage with king Henry the Third of France, whose sister Claude he had espoused; and the duke de Vaudemont, who, on account of that prince's youth, shared with the duchess dowager of Lorraine the internal administration, determined to oppose the free passage of the German auxiliaries through the states of his kinsman.

In arousing the spirit of Lorraine to resistance, the Glass Valley was not forgotten; and the gentlemen of that community were summoned to appear under the ducal banners in the field. This was considered as a heavy hardship by the noblemen of the valley of Lorraine. They represented that most of them  
were

were aged, unused to aught but peaceful pursuits, and that, if their sons were summoned from them in their stead, none would be left to follow the occupation from which alone they derived their subsistence. A subsidy was then proposed, to which they equally objected, declaring their utter inability to raise the sum.

In vain, Chastelar, who better knew the disposition of princes, wished them rather to suffer some wrong than to provoke the duke to the uttermost. Message after message was sent to the Glass Valley, requiring fortune and service, and meeting with the same excuses. At length the duke, enraged, declared the inhabitants of the valley guilty of contumacy, and swore that the valued privileges by which they had so long maintained their singular state should no longer be extended to them.

It was then that Chastelar, though long treated with alight as a prophet of  
c 4
evil,

evil, determined to make one effort in favour of his distressed brethren. He resolved to take a journey to Nancy, where the young duke of Lorraine held his court, to throw himself at the feet of the duke de Vaudemont, and represent the utter ruin to which he condemned the community, and endeavour, by prudence and submission, to obtain a mitigation of the sentence. Rose and Blanche saw with apprehension the fatigue and chagrin to which their father exposed himself, in braving alone the resentment of an irritated court.—“My girls,” said the old soldier, “in this life *rien sans peine*—pain and labour, either of body or mind, form the appointed price we must pay for all that obtains the esteem of each other or the favour of Heaven. What shall be the event of my journey remains in the hands of Providence. God, if it is his good pleasure, can endue my lips with wisdom to move the duke’s hard heart. At all events,

events, duty commands me to make the essay—duty, that dictated the motto of the Chastelars—

‘ FAIS CE QUE DOIS  
ADVIENNE QUE POURRO.’

With this maxim in his heart, and with many a tender charge how they should conduct themselves during his short absence, the sire de Chastelar bade farewell to the two daughters of his love, and took his solitary way to Nancy.

The important communications recorded in the last chapter had imparted a shade of thoughtfulness to the manners of Blanche. Her feelings were divided on the subject. With the idea of Cadet le Perle arose a secret pleasure in the consciousness of being born to rank and title, as bringing her nearer to the lofty object of her first and only love: when again she thought of Rose, a pang pressed upon her heart that she



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could no longer in reality call her sister, and she could only reconcile herself to the change, by resolving that she ever should be sister in her love.

"I think, mademoiselle de Teligny," said Rose, as she sat in her favourite attitude, her arm round Blanche's neck, and her bright hair cast carelessly over Blanche's cheek, "the star of your horizon begins to clear; but what will become of your poor playfellow, when you are acknowledged by your noble kin, married to your gallant knight, and far removed from the Glass Valley?"

"Do not, oh, do not, Rose," said Blanche, shuddering, "give me that fatal name—a name bathed in blood and tears! Alas, my beloved Rose! it sounds but as mockery to me. How many accidents must conspire to make my lofty birth avail me! and should hope's wildest dream be gratified, think you that aught could yield me enjoyment separated from you?" No, Rose;  
together

together we have passed the days of infancy—together shared each childish sport and pleasure—one God we have worshipped, one father have obeyed, and one name have borne till now; *those* are the ties that can never be rent asunder, and whatever Fate may have in store for me, you must share it, or I reject the boon."

While thus the time passed away with these lovely sisters in soul, the skies became suddenly overcast, a violent storm was heard in its first mutterings to threaten the valley, and presently the heavens were one sheet of livid flame.

Blanche beheld the phenomenon with awe, but her mind, cast in heroic mould, was a stranger to physical terrors; not so poor Rose, who, helpless and scared as a young bird beneath the tempest, could find no refuge from her fears but in her adopted sister's bosom.

The wrathful fury of the elements increased.

passed. Beal, after peal of thunder shook their humble dwelling, and reverberated along the hollow sides of the valley.—“ Surely! there is the voice of God in these sounds!” exclaimed Blanche, her lofty mind sinking at length beneath the force of mental terrors. “ He comes to probe the mis-proud and sinful thoughts that, stealthily as I denied them, stole unawares into my soul. Oh God, forgive them!” and she sunk on her knees as she spoke, in which action she was accompanied by Rose, who, bending her lovely head to the storm during this awful visitation, continued to pray deeply and fervently. At length the rage of the tempest abated. A deluge of rain descending seemed to quench the fiery heat of the atmosphere. By degrees it became more moderate, and seemed only to fall in quantities sufficient to refresh the earth. Large lucent drops rolled from every verdant leaf in the valley, and herb

herb and flower seemed to revive under the genial influence.

Suddenly a beautiful rainbow made itself visible; it broadened, deepened, and at length seemed to span the spot where Blanche and Henry had so often wandered.—“Look, look!” cried Rose, her spirits reviving with reviving nature; “what see you, Blanche? a rainbow, ha! the first that has appeared since *he* departed. What says the omen? ‘I AM THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT AND PEACE.’”

Blanche was unusually affected by this application of Henry’s last solemn parting words—words which up to this moment had remained wrapped in impenetrable obscurity, and yet in which she trusted with love’s unquestioning faith.

“I cannot remain longer,” exclaimed the ever active Rose, starting up, “without inquiring whether our kind neighbours have not received some dreadful detriment—

detriment—I was certainly very selfish, only to think of my own terrors just now.”

Blanche would not be behindhand in this work of humanity; and the two girls sallied forth together into the valley, where a sight met their eyes which had the effect of immediately suspending their benevolent purpose.

Wedge*d* in a narrow and precipitous part of the valley, was an equipage from which some ladies richly dressed had alighted during the storm, which appeared to have threatened the horses and the vehicle alike with destruction. Several horsemen and pages, the one having fastened their terrified beasts against the trees, the others having lightly run at once at the call of danger, appeared surrounding the principal lady, who, wild with terror, seemed, like Rose and Blanche, to have sought, by prayer in the hour of danger, to deprecate an offended God; but not like Rose and  
Blanche,

Blanche, had she recovered her serenity with reviving nature. Her countenance was haggard and fearful—her hair partly dishevelled; and ere she had come perfectly to herself, and while she yet lay in the arms of her attendants, she muttered sounds of deep and perilous import. It was much to be feared that conscience aided the awful voice of the elements, and had prompted the kneeling prayer that had bowed her haughty head so low.

Though the two females who pressed round her seemed both to be ladies of distinction, an air of superior majesty marked the now-reviving stranger; and she replied to Rose and Blanche's offers of assistance with a lofty courtesy, that reminded Rose of her visions of queens, and Blanche of Cadet le Perle.

"We thank your kindness," said she, in reply to their entreaty that she would accept the hospitality of the cottage in the valley; "refreshment we care not  
for,

for, but a few hours rest would be most welcome."

"I grieve, noble lady," resumed Blanche, "that the absence of the sire de Chastelar will prevent the honours of our home from being performed in a guise suitable to your rank and merit."

"What, are ye the daughters of a Chastelar?" resumed the stranger, fixing her penetrating eyes on them: "then are ye noble. Well I remember the name. A Chastelar once aimed at the sun, and was blasted by its brightness."

The girls, as well knowing the disastrous story to which she alluded, hung down their heads in blushing acknowledgment; while the stranger turned to one of the ladies, who accompanied her, and said—"My good d'Uzes, think you not that the slender forms of these two nymphs of the valley might find space within our chariot?"

The dame d'Uzes, with the readiness  
with

with which persons yield to the fantasy of an undisputed superior, accepted the offered accommodation of a palfrey from one of the attendant squires, and ceded her place, which from her ample bulk proved quite sufficient for the accommodation of Rose and Blanche.

"And now that this *tormento* is over-past," said the commanding stranger, "we may venture to proceed with such guides into the Glass Valley."

She motioned to the girls to ascend the vehicle with courtesy, but with the air of one whose will had never been disputed; and Rose and Blanche found themselves, with astonishment, instead of ambling upon palfreys (the highest of their rustic ideas of magnificence), moving along in an equipage of which they had hitherto had no opportunity of forming a conception\*.

As

\* The surprise of Rose and Blanche at the sight of a coach will not be reckoned too great by the reader, who remembers



As they advanced into the valley the prospect increased, and deepened in beauty; and the stranger, whose taste on every subject seemed to be much exercised and refined, could not refrain from an admiring exclamation. Rose returned it with an answering smile; but the more thoughtful Blanche hung down her head and wept.

"Why those tears?" said the visitor.

"Lady," replied Blanche, "I cannot choose but grieve when I think how this lovely scene, which calls forth your gracious praises, may soon be filled with the voices

remembers this passage in Thuanus:—"In the year 1588 there were only two chariots at court—the queen's carriage, and that of Diana, natural daughter of Henry the Second. This fashion was just introduced from Italy, at the latter end of Francis the First's reign. The first in the city belonged to Christopher Thuanus, after he was chosen president of the parliament; but neither he nor his wife used it, except for excursions into the country. On other occasions madame de Thou modestly contented herself with riding on horseback behind a servant."—*Collinson's Life of Thuanus*, pages 53, 54.

voices of wo and lamentation, and ours among the first."

"Indeed! How read ye this?" said the lady, with an air of unusual interest.

"Because," said Rose, recalled to the subject of their habitual fears by Blanche's sorrow, "they threaten to deprive the Glass noblemen (of whom my father is one) of their privileges, and to drive them from their homes."

"Ye speak in riddles," said the lady, quickly. "Oh what pretext is such oppression exercised?"

Blanche took up the discourse.—"The duke de Vaudemont," she answered, "is assembling troops to resist the German invasion of Lorraine; and because our poor valley could not furnish its contingent, we perish."

The stranger knit her dark brow.—"Beshrew my heart, Vaudemont is overproud!" she exclaimed. "We—"

She paused, and Rose de Chastelar observed—

observed—"My father says our nobles are not wholly free from blame. Better were it to endure some straits than provoke the powerful duke. He is a pious prince, and little wonder is it that he should look with a jealous eye upon the union of the Protestant princes of Germany with the Hugonot king of Navarre."

"I cry you mercy, my little stateswoman!" replied the lady, smiling. "If it is written that the Hugonots must prevail, we can but pray to God in French. But your father appears to be an elder of the valley; what part has he taken in these troubles?"

Here Blanche, encouraged by the interest the lady seemed to shew, drew a picture of the former peace and happiness of the valley, the cheerful indigence of its industrious and gentle inhabitants, and the venerable antiquity of the privileges by which their humble existence was secured. She next painted the misery

sery the threatened destruction of those privileges would cause : despair gave her eloquence ; and the energy and sincerity of her manner, set off by the expression of a very beautiful countenance, interested her auditor to a degree she was at no pains to conceal. She did not weep, for her disposition did not seem of the weeping kind ; but it was evident Blanche's eloquence had excited in her mind some compassion for the distresses of the inhabitants of the Glass Valley ; and Rose and Blanche could not forbear fancying that the interest thus excited would be, in some way or other, productive of good.

Whatever she felt, the incognita waved the subject for the present, and seemed intent on drawing the two fair recluses into more general conversation. Her manners, at once dignified and engaging, possessed a playful amenity which recalled the confidence that her majestic air might have repelled. It was evident, she

she had proposed the entrance of our young heroines into her carriage that she might judge of their abilities in conversation, uninterrupted by the presence of her companions ; for in the course of their short *trajet*, she started subjects of various and different import, and appeared to note their observations with a degree of attention not to be expected in one so much their superior in experience.

Rose observed that the dark and penetrating eyes of the stranger were more frequently turned upon Blanche than upon herself, with a deep and piercing scrutiny ; but still a scrutiny of that flattering sort with which a visitor may regard a lovely and distinguished female, in whose favour report has already taught her to form an advantageous prepossession. Happily, the lessons of the martialist and the poet Chastelar had not been thrown away ; so that, with the exception of a little becoming diffidence, the conversation

conversation and manners of these two young damsels were in no way different from the most polished lady of the court.

Arrived at the cottage of the sire de Chastelar, the exclamations and regrets of the train were numerous at the idea of a long delay ; for the means of accommodation were so scanty, that they could not but foresee great inconvenience to themselves, however the quickly-conceived prepossession of their principal might be gratified.

The dame d'Uzes, with that spirit of fruitless retrospection in which some peevish persons love to indulge, could not forbear observing, that had the party set out earlier, so as to have the day before them, which was *her* advice, they would not have been overtaken by the storm in the valley.

" Thy remarks are always equally well chosen and well timed, my good d'Uzes, and I acknowledge my error in  
too

too long spreading my pillow," said the elder lady, with a smile of unobtrusive sweetness; "but what was the animal upon a similar charge returned by Lorenzo the magnificent?" "My interesting dreams," said the patriot to his own careful mistress, "are of more importance than thy weaving's business." "Oh! ... Observing Blanche smile at this reply, she turned to her with an encouraging air, and said:—"And are you too acquainted with the far-famed name of Lorenzo de Medici, surnamed the Magnificent, my lovely lily of the valley?"

"My uncle has left me in ignorance of no name that boasts aught of noble or illustrious," replied Blanche, with modest readiness; "but those of Lorenzo the Magnificent and Cosmo de Medici I regard with more admiration than esteem."

"And wherefore the distinction?" said the stranger.

"Because,"

"Because," replied Blanche, "they corrupted the Florentines, by introducing luxury into the vale of Arno; and, under the specious name of fathers of their country, became her worst enslavers."

A strong pressure on the arm of Blanche, by the dame de Seuves (the third lady of the party), announced that, for some reason, this was a dangerous subject; but Blanche, instead of (like an awkward person) looking round, blushing, or making a dead pause, with instant and graceful self-possession, changed the conversation.

The lady, who had at first bit her lip and coloured indignantly at Blanche's free avowal of her sentiments, noticed this dexterity with the approbation which artists in every line involuntarily bestow upon merit of the kind in which they themselves excel.—"A clear and noble spirit, on my truth!" she mur-



mured: "a mind—a character, joined to a bearing that would suit a throne."

Blanche, on her part, looked on the stranger with admiration—such admiration as the devoted bird may be supposed to feel for the golden and gaudy snake that fixes its fascinating eyes on her. The figure of the lady was rich and noble: time had evidently touched her fine form and face, yet still much remained to tell that she had once been beautiful: her dark piercing eye, fine formed nose, and full vermilion lip, altogether composed a physiognomy at once lofty and attractive; and she well knew at times how to exchange her glance of command for a smile of indescribable sweetness. Her dress was rich and well fashioned, and the elastic hose of silk, an article of apparel but just then introduced, set off to the greatest advantage the beauty of a well-turned ankle—a beauty of which, to an advanced age, she still continued to be proud.

We

We are told, that in those fatal climes, where plague taints the air, introducing death to the vessels lingering on their coasts, ships that have touched there, if suspected of having caught the contagion, are obliged, by a significant ensign, to give warning of the danger of their approach; but there is no such safeguard against the introduction of depravity into the abodes of peace and innocence. Vice cannot be compelled to *hoist the yellow plague flag*, as she nears her bark to Virtue's domains; but too often, rather, appearing under the colours of her opposite, she obtains a safe and easy passport to her prey.

The lady, with that lofty disregard of trifling inconveniences which alike distinguishes great minds, whether great in evil or in good, had continued conversing with the girls, apparently sounding the depth of their understandings, unmindful of fatigue—unmindful of the dampness of her garments, which they

had repeatedly urged her to change. At length she yielded to the entreaties of her female companions, and retired to an inner apartment, whither the ladies had ordered to be conveyed one of the valises containing her clothes. She excused herself from accepting the attendance of Rose and Blanche, with an earnestness which intimated that it was her *real* wish to dispense with it. Rose, however, "on hospitable thoughts intent," insinuated her slender form between the ladies D'Uzes and De Sauves, in order to ascertain that nothing was lacking to the comfort of the noble stranger.

Blanche was going to follow her example, when she was surprised by a slight struggle, which was followed by the door being bolted withinside. An indescribable feeling of alarm now took possession of Blanche's mind; vague, yet agonizing fears for the safety of her sister—fears that her noble mind would  
have

have disdained to entertain upon its own account, seized her upon this unaccountable exclusion. She listened, but heard nought, save the palpitations of her own heart. Presently a faint shriek from Rose, and a sob, were audible—then all was silent. Blanche again attempted to force the door, but it resisted her hand. In an agony of terror, and not knowing what she did, she rushed into the outer apartment, and vainly endeavoured to count the lapse of time before this cruel separation should end. Such a state of solicitude was too distressing long to have been borne; and she was not doomed long to suffer it. In about ten minutes the noble stranger again made her appearance, elegantly arrayed, her eyes and lips beaming with glances of benignity and smiles of graciousness. Rose accompanied her with silent respect; her eyes were indeed red, and her cheek pale (a very unusual thing with her), but her manner betrayed few symptoms

symptoms of the agitation which Blanche believed her to have recently undergone; on the contrary, there was in her air and countenance an appearance of resigned, though melancholy determination, such as Blanche had seldom witnessed in her.

The stranger announced her intention of proceeding on her journey in the cool of the evening; and while her repast was preparing, became more and more gracious and communicative. She had a daughter, she said, well married, and settled at Nancy, and *that* was the occasion of her journeying into Lorraine.—

"My daughter Claude," she continued, "will be impatiently counting the hours till we meet, and that must needs shorten a visit which the unexpected graces this cottage exhibits might otherwise tempt me to prolong."

Rose could scarcely dissemble her pleasure when the dark stranger announced her intention *not to sleep beneath their roof*; while Blanche politely observed—

observed—"Lady, your daughter's name is that of our gracious princess; may it be that she is called after the consort of the duke of Lorraine?"

The stranger smiled.—"No," she replied, "my daughter Claude, was not named *after* the duchess of Lorraine.—But to call a new cause. What make my good De Sauves and D'Uzes here, that they cannot discover for us some diversion more enlivening than mere discourse? What say ye, ladies, to making devices? it is a pleasant pastime, and now in rare vogue."

The art of making devices, which had long been a favourite amusement with the ladies of France, was almost unknown to Rose and Blanche, who knew no instances of it, but the family motto of the Chastelars.

"Great shame it were," observed the stranger, "that maidens so accomplished in all else should want this finishing crown, as it were, to the arts practised

by the fair and gay. Mary queen of Scots, and niece of Francis of Lorraine, excelled in this accomplishment; nay, queen Catherine herself did not disdain it. What says honest Estienne de Fossé, in his luminous treatise on the subject? "A device is a particular and rare conceit, which is made by means of a similitude or comparison, having for that purpose the figure of something either natural (so it be not human), or artificial, accompanied with acute, subtle, concise words."

"He farther extols it," added madame de Sauves, "by saying, that as a single ray of the sun may illuminate a cavern, so a single device enlightens the subject."

"And he observes that it is an incitement to well-doing," subjoined the dame d'Uzes; "for that he who has once propounded a virtuous sentiment in a device, is obliged ever after to appear to  
all

all the world such as he hath declared himself."

"My device then," resumed the lady who had first spoken, "is chosen in strict conformity to those rules: for it announceth what hath ever been the sole delight of my long and often traversed life. It is the rainbow—emblem of restored tranquillity, with the legend — 'I AM THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT AND PEACE.'"

The ladies De Sauves and D'Uzes looked at each other with a very singular expression of countenance: but Blanche felt as if these words had penetrated to the very centre of her heart: she even thought the stranger's dark eyes were turned upon herself with marked expression as she uttered them.—"Was it possible? did they announce the fulfilment of her ever-regretted lover's prophecy?" murmured upon her lips, "at their last sad parting in the valley?" Well did she remember Henry's mys-



terious words—"The rainbow, that spans the heavens, yet bends its arch to earth. Look up, dear girl, and when you see that sign, let it say to your heart—I AM THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT AND PEACE."

The wondrous stranger had pronounced those words that were the passport to Blanche's heart. She remembered too that her arrival had been actually announced by a *real* rainbow adorning the spot where Blanche and her lover had last met; and casual as this coincidence must certainly have been, it could not fail of making its impression on a heart prepared for the entrance of superstition, by the admittance of love.

Ever accustomed to command her feelings, and to disdain complaint, Blanche was not aware of what a dreary and comfortless character they had lately been, but by the sudden illumination of mind—

• See Volume I. Chapter VIII.

mind—the buoyancy of heart, this talismanic sentence produced. The effect was exactly like that of a gleam of light beaming on a benighted traveller. Yet unless followed up by actions, she was forced to acknowledge that still nothing could be more unsatisfactory or unexplained. Was this lady to be the agent by whose means Henry was to be restored to her? Was not their ultimate reunion the covert meaning of Henry's obscure expressions? How was this to be furthered by the unexpected acquaintance she had this day formed? and what connexion could the majestic stranger have with her fate? All these questions Blanche repeated rapidly to herself, but the more she reflected, the more the case appeared wrapt in inexplicable mystery. Could she but learn the stranger's name, which she had not yet, like the ladies De Saaves and D'Uzes, communicated, it might be some assistance to her conjectures:

tures: and actuated by this impression, she now ventured to ask to *what* noble dame the device of the rainbow belonged?

"Ye have heard, perchance," replied the lady, "of the marquis de Noirmontiers."

Blanche answered in the affirmative; for she had heard of the haughty favourite of Catherine de Medicis from Cadet le Perle.

The lady resumed—"You now stand in her presence." She then turned the discourse to other mottoes and devices, and warmly praised *that* assumed by the sire de Chastelar—

"FAIS CE QUE DOIS,

ADVIENNE QUE POURRA."

"—May it speed him on his errand!" said she; "but *should* he fail, remember you have a friend at the court of Nancy, who may be able to further your suit. Take this scarf, beautiful Blanche—it may

may perhaps prove of service to you. Should the duke de Vaudemont refuse your father, let him try a second petition; should *that* also fail, give him this scarf, whereon is embroidered the legend ~~and~~ 'I AM THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT AND PEACE.' Let him produce it, and be secure, for it will bring peace to the valley of Lorraine."

The lady added to her mysterious gift another present; it was a small richly-bound copy of—"*Annibal Caro on the Art of making Devices, addressed to the duchess of Urbino.*"

"Farewell, fair Blanche," said she, waving her hand in act of departure; "I expect to find thee a perfect adept when we meet again." She then motioned to the other ladies to rise, and observing that the evening promised fair, expressed her wish to proceed on her journey.

Rose saw her reenter the carriage, and beheld the last of the splendid retinue sweep through the valley, with unfeign-  
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ed satisfaction ; And, then throwing her arms round her sister's neck, exclaimed—  
“ Oh, Blanche, sister of my soul ! trust not to that dark lady.”

Blanche seized this opening to request, with her usual frankness, that Rose would relate to her all that had passed during the moments she and the other ladies had been locked up with the stranger. But Rose, instead of replying with that sisterly openness with which they were both ever accustomed to unbosom to each other the little adventures that might chance to happen to each separately,

“ Works of day past, and morrow's next design,”

preserved a profound and mournful silence ; which was to Blanche the more distressing, as it for the first time gave her the idea of reserve and coldness, in one who until now had not had a thought concealed from her. Still poor Rose persisted in avowing her hatred of the lady,

lady, though she would adduce no reason for this apparently ungenerous sentiment. Like Coleridge's *Christabelle*, she seemed to have the power of *expressing* her repugnance, but to labour under some wondrous enchantment, that prevented her from *justifying* it.

Blanche, whose mind had been filled with delightful presages, from the stranger's seeming to possess the password of her lover, could not bring herself so readily to give up the hope that her visit boded good. She dwelt upon this sentiment strongly, and while gently reproaching Rose for her unkind reserve, concluded with saying—"I shall delay forming a definitive opinion till I hear from this lady again; but her bearing was very remarkable, and I cannot resist an internal persuasion, that some way or other she is connected with my fate, and is destined to work out good to me."

"*She work but good!*" exclaimed Rose, starting as from a trance. "Blanche, believe

believe it not. *She* ' THE HARBINGER OF PEACE AND LIGHT !' she continued, scornfully alluding to her device, " rather a messenger of guilt and sorrow. Oh, Blanche ! a storm of darkness announced her coming, and evil alone will attend on her."

" Rose, you terrify me !" exclaimed the bewildered Blanche ; " explain, I pray you, your mysterious words ?"

" Blanche, I cannot !" Rose returned, and mournfully shook her head.

" At least you can give some reason for your prejudice against this lady ?"

" *Prejudice !*" repeated Rose, in a thrilling tone.

" Dear Rose," said Blanche, " this is the first time you ever refused to aid me with your counsel. I wish, yet fear to trust this lady, whose kindness seemed so great, so sudden. You know my heart—all it has wished, all it has suffered—oh, tell me what I am to do ?"

" Follow your last impulse," said Rose eagerly—

eagerly—"that urges you not to trust her."

"It is passing strange!" said Blanche. "Oh, speak another word, and enlighten me respecting this lady of Noirmoutier!"

Rose seemed to endure an inward struggle between her desire of obliging Blanche, and some fearful repugnance.

"You know what she is—then tell me," resumed Blanche, and waited in earnest expectation for her answer.

"A sorceress!" at length exclaimed Rose, and immediately fainted.



## CHAPTER III.

Ye pleasing phantoms, toothing forms,  
 Who people Fancy's sunny beam,  
 When Hope the budant bosom warms,  
 And Joy inspires the raptur'd dream ;  
 Ye who the fancied laurels wreath,  
 Which animate the brave to dare,  
 Ye who the soft enchantment breathe,  
 Which spreads perfection round the fair ;  
 Aid me, ye echoes of the world's acclaim,  
 Ye visionary shades of unsubstantial Fame !

*Ode to the Imagination.*

THOUGH well acquainted with the susceptibility of Rose's rather exalted imagination, Blanche had never before known it to lead her into an extravagance equal to the preceding one.

Far from being able to obtain from her an elucidation of these mysterious expressions,

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expressions, Rose shrunk in terror from any fresh recurrence to the subject; and it was evident she had only been betrayed by her extreme emotion into the imprudence that so much excited Blanche's curiosity.

Blanche, on her side, could not give up the hope of hearing more from the marchioness de Noirmoutiers; but the return of the sire de Chastelar from Nancy, with confirmation of their worst fears, suspended for a time every other thought and feeling.

"Yes, it is over," said the sire de Chastelar, after he had thrown himself exhausted into a seat, and for a moment covered his eyes with his hands, as if the sight of day was hateful to him—"the marble that adorns the apartments of his palace is not harder than the duke's heart. Vainly have I tried to move him—the destiny of the valley of Lorraine is fixed—it is to be given as a domain to the count de Dally, the proud

proud favourite of the duke, and no submission would now avail aught to move him. Submission! he wishes it not—he only wishes for a pretext to effect our ruin.”

Blanche heard him in silence, but deep plans were revolving in her bosom. The inhabitants of the valley were dear to her, not merely as the only friends she had ever known, but from the fond partiality and pride with which her own beauty, talent, and goodness, had ever been regarded by them. Their pains and pleasures were *hers*, and she did not regard the banishment of her adopted family and herself from their cherished home, with greater dread, than the ruin of the kind friends with whom she had spent her earliest days.

The thought of the marquise de Nemours's present suggested itself in this extremity of distress, and with it a bolder project than any the marquise had suggested.—“Father,” said she, “I would

would do much for the valley of Lorraine—I feel strongly tempted to throw myself at the duke's feet, to speak in behalf of our suffering people; and if I fail——”

“If thou failest, child! what chance has such a mad plan to succeed?” exclaimed the sire de Chastelar, impatiently.

“Nay, I speak not from the prompting of Fancy,” returned Blanche—“I have a resource;” and producing the scarf, she related the whole story of the marquise de Noirmoutier's visit, and her promise of befriending them in case every other attempt should fail.

The sire de Chastelar was much struck with her narrative; and even Rose, in the deep distress to which they were reduced, was unwilling to damp the rising confidence he seemed to feel, by mentioning her suspicions.

After some deliberation, the sire de Chastelar said—“Your design, my love,  
is

is bold, but not unmaidenly. I was a fool not to have thought already, that youth and beauty might succeed, where old scars and white hairs were disregarded. Go, my Blanche—I see the blood of Coligny in thy active desire to do good—thy lofty yet modest bearing; but thy sister and I shall bear thee company; for I boast of *one* friend at the court of Lorraine, who will obtain thee ready access to the duke.”

Blanche pressed the sire de Chastelar's hand to her lips, in acknowledgment of his kindness. Part of the night was spent in drawing up a new petition, and accompanied by the wishes and benedictions of the valley, the trio set forward on the following morning for Nancy, with far livelier anticipations than those that the sire de Chastelar had experienced on his solitary journey.

When they approached the town of Nancy, nature itself seemed to smile on their enterprise, and art to vie with nature

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ture in exhibiting an appearance of unusual festivity. Nothing was to be seen but masking and feasting in the streets. The windows were hung with tapestry, the streets strewn with flowers; and ever and anon was to be heard some merry minstrel chanting forth praises of the duke de Vaudemont, and the young duke and duchess of Lorraine.

The precincts of the court were so crowded, that it was with difficulty the sire de Chastelar made his way up to the friend upon whom he depended for facilitating Blanche's suit. This friend was Francis Scepeaux, lord of Vieilleville, and a marshal of France. In his youthful days Chastelar had served under him; and on his late visit to court, though spurned and rejected, Vieilleville had acknowledged their former intimacy, and bade him command his best services.

Blanche could hardly repress a sensation

tion amounting to awe, when presented to this majestic veteran. Francis Scepeaux, lord of Vieilleville, was such a nobleman as Froissart would have loved to describe. In him the warrior and the *grand seigneur* were mingled in equal proportions. Loyal and brave as Bayard—graceful and yielding as a courtier, but stern and inflexible to his enemies, a gloom still sat upon his brow, in memory that he had yielded as a courtier *once* too much. In his ordinary way of living, he blended the love of external magnificence with domestic simplicity; a Paladin in the lists—a patriarch by his paternal hearth.

“Well have you chosen your time to renew your suit,” he said, addressing Chastelar; “the court holds gala, and the duke will hardly refuse any boon that is asked of him these three days.”

When he learned the purpose of Blanche, he spoke to her with paternal encouragement, and conversed with the  
most

most friendly familiarity till they reached the duke's closet.—"I must see you all," he said, "at my castle of Duretal. I like not, at my years, to bear a part in pageants, and should not stay an hour among this crowd, but for the sake of my daughter Jane."

Chastelar replied—"Mademoiselle Jeanne de Vieilleville I remember a lovely child: she afterwards (I heard it reported) married the count de Saulx."

The sieur de Vieilleville's brow darkened—"No," said he, "she did *not* marry the count de Saulx; but, soft—we approach the presence."

If Blanche had felt intimidated by the majestic deportment of the sieur de Vieilleville, much greater was the trembling confusion she felt on appearing before the duke de Vaudemont. No gleam of benevolence softened the austere expression of that prince's wrinkled brow; such was his habitual aspect; and even when he granted a request, he



seemed rather to discharge a duty than enjoy a pleasure. Blanche, as directed, cast herself at his feet, and exclaiming—“A boon, a boon, great prince!” attempted to present her petition; but awe and agitation unnerved her trembling hand, and, powerless, she let it fall upon the floor.

It was picked up and presented by the sieur de Vieilleville, who added of himself—“It is a petition, my lord, from the distressed noblemen of the valley near Varennes.”

The duke's brow darkened to a still more portentous frown, and he even put his hand to the hilt of his sword—“Name not to me those misproud beggars!” he angrily said. “*Theirs* is the only application, Vieilleville, for which even *thy* intercession availeth nought. Their fate is sealed—their doom gone forth—the grant of their domains made out to Duilly, and——”

“Oh, say not the grant is made out,  
my

my lord?" exclaimed Blanche — "say not that, by one stroke of the pen, you have turned out the most faithful subjects from their homes, made beggars of their families, and sent them forth with ruined means and gentle blood, shorn to the quick, and shrinking with helpless pride from the rude glance of contumely! There is a sorrow, my lord, that killeth the inmost heart: it is when the poor in purse, but gentle in blood, receive from the rustic hand of sordid pride the bitter boon of alms they wish, yet fear to refuse. Let it not be *ours*, great sir! Consider that the inhabitants of the valley are noble—noble, though poor—that they have hitherto supported themselves by honest toil, demanding boon of no man. A queen granted them their privileges: let not the gift of the royal Blanche be recalled by the duke of Vaudemont! Oh that my weak woman's voice possessed the power to repeat the complaints that reecho through the valley

of Lorraine!—Assist me, noble Vieille-ville, to plead with the gracious duke—assist me with thy wisdom to find arguments to melt his heart—words to induce him to reverse his most dread, though equitable sentence!”

In the beginning of her address, Blanche’s voice had expressed the hurry and perturbation of her feelings; as she advanced, it assumed tones of the most melting pathos; but towards the conclusion, it sunk to an almost inaudible whisper; and softly declining her head upon her breast, she waited, with cheeks glowing with unusual emotion, and arms meekly folded upon that modest breast, the result of her most painful, most courageous effort.

Beauty so exquisite, a character so decided, united to such winning grace and such enchanting modesty, had never before been seen; and had the duke’s heart been like that of Henry of Navarre, Blanche had that moment obtained *gain de cause*.

*de cause.* But the duke was immovable, though somewhat touched.—“Well hast thou pled, damsel,” he said, in a softened voice; “but we owe it to our kinsman, whose representative here we only are—we owe it to ourselves, to grant no pardon to contumacy and rebellion; and by the honour of a prince, by all that Christian men hold sacred, we have sworn——”

“Oh, not the ruin of the valley of Lorraine!” exclaimed Blanche. “Look at this symbol, noble duke—look at it before your decree goes forth: does it say nothing for us?”

As she spoke, she drew from beneath her dress the brodered scarf, with the motto — “I AM THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT AND PEACE,” and held it up to the eyes of the astonished duke.

He started, and in a hurried voice exclaimed,—“Ha! where got you that token?”

Blanche replied—“From a lady, a

kind and gracious lady, who sojourned in our valley in her way to the court of Nancy, and who told me that if I produced it in our utmost need, it should not plead in vain."

The duke cast up his eyes as in silent wonder at the influence under which he was obliged to act, and then said, in a slow, deliberate voice—"Truly we can refuse nothing to the owner of those words and colours.—Damsel of Lorraine, thou hast prevailed—the valley is tribute free!"

The strong revulsion of joy produced by the almost un hoped-for success of this last resource, was too much for Blanche. A heroine only in mind, she was a woman in all the bashfulness of her sex, its fears, and terrors; and now that the necessity for exertion was past, a faintness, that for a few moments overpowered her, shewed how unequal her frame was to keep pace with the exertion

tion of the noble mind to which it was united.

From this delirium of joy she was roused by the lord of Vieilleville, who, after introducing Blanche into the presence of the duke de Vaudemont, had quitted the closet. He now returned to say that the young duchess of Lorraine was desirous of having the fair pleader of the rights of the valley introduced to her.

Blanche recovering herself, arose and accompanied the sieur de Vieilleville through the pictured galleries and magnificent anti-rooms, hung with tapestry and cloth of gold, the luxuries of which had the power to strike, but not to dazzle her mind. At length, at a touch of the sieur de Vieilleville, a door flew open, and a smaller, but more elegant apartment, met her view.

Occupied in the labours of the needle, the duchess of Lorraine sat there, surrounded by her little *court*; but above

her, sat *one* lady of more advanced years and majestic presence.

"Mother," said the duchess, turning to her with a smile, "your little *protégée* appears at your wish."

Blanche, trembling, looked up, and immediately recognised the lady whom she had known in the valley, under the title of the marquise de Noirmoutiers, the donor of the scarf, the winner of her cause; but her suspicions had already been awakened, from the discovery of her unlimited influence, and she now wondered that she had not at once acknowledged, in the rich, noble form, the dark Italian eye, and the imperious lip, the often-described person of Catherine de Medicis\*.

The queen received her with a grace mingled with gaiety, which she well knew

\* "Cette princesse, cause de tant de troubles, avoit pris pour sa devise un arc-en-ciel, avec ces mots—*J'apporte la lumière et la tranquillité.*"—MADAME GENLIS' *Histoire de Henri le Grand.*

knew how to assume, to mask the deepest designs.—“Confess,” said she, laughing, “you are disappointed in being deprived of your friend the marchioness. Look around, and you will see her restored to you.” At the same moment she beckoned to the lady who, in the cottage, had borne the name of the dame de Sauves, and said, with her accustomed grace—“This is the good Noirmoutiers, who in the valley accommodated us for an hour with her title, and resumed that of De Sauves, to which in fact she has a right, it being that of her first husband, and exchanged by a second marriage for the loftier one of Noirmoutiers. To her care we commend you, as to an able guide for beauty launched amid the perils of a court.—And now, my daughter,” she continued, turning to Claude, duchess of Lorraine, “suffer your ladies for once to play the idle housewives. Some bravery is going on in the court below, and it shall be



mine to introduce my pretty Blanche to it."

Leaning on the arm of the seneschal, the queen-mother proceeded to a covered gallery, from which she and the duchess of Lorraine could commodiously view the sports. They consisted in rehearsing the characters of a *carrousel*, to be held the following day, in honour of the visit of the queen.

Blanche followed in her train, and sought with her eyes among the crowd for her father and sister, without whom no pleasure, however lively, would be complete.

Catherine de Medicis discovered Rose by the side of the sire de Chastelar, conversing with the lord of Vieilleville. She instantly dispatched a page of honour, to call them over to her; and placing Rose on one side, while Blanche occupied the other nearest her person, addressed the sire de Chastelar the most gratifying expressions on the merit of his

his two daughters. No one, when she chose, could flatter more agreeably than Catherine de Medicis.

The sire de Chastelar paid his homage to her without embarrassment, though with the most profound respect ; and as he took off his barret cap, and made the genuflexion that custom rendered necessary, the native grace of his manner announced the man, who, although it may not have been his fortune through life often to stand in the presence of greatness, yet claims from his gentle birth unalienable right so to do.

The queen laughed and chatted with the two fair Chastelars ; and it is needless to add, that the surrounding cavaliers sighed and admired. But Blanche was by far the principal centre of attention, from the mixture of feminine attraction and daring heroism her conduct of the morning had displayed.

The circumstances of that eventful morning already began to be whispered

about, and the fair liberator of Lorraine was the chief object towards which was directed the efforts of the combatants in the ring, the aspirants after victory or praise.

In this rehearsal of a combat, the failure of some of the parties excited as much amusement and satisfaction among the lookers-on, as the success of others; and exclamations of terror, peals of laughter, and shouts of applause, shook the circle, with little or no intermission.

The count de Duilly, heir to the seneschal of Lorraine, and the duke de Nemours, distinguished in the annals of gallantry and war, were among the most successful in disputing the palm of elegance and dexterity.

Four figures were conspicuous among this motley group—an Indian, a Moor, a Paladin of the court of Charlemagne, and a chevalier of the then modern French court. Among these combatants, Rose distinguished that the flash-  
ing

ing eyes of the Moor were often directed towards the part of the balcony where she sat.

CHAP.

CHAPTER IV.  
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—————Didst thou but know
How fondly I have watch'd her, since the day
Her mother died—
—————how she hath been
My ponder'd thought by day, my dream by night,
My sweet companion, pupil, tutor, child !
Thou wouldst not wonder that my drowning eye
And choking utterance upbraid my tongue,
That tells thee—she is thine ! *Virginus.*

THIS exercise, which was a kind of rehearsal of the projected amusements of the morrow, was now over ; and Rose and Blanche were conducted by the marquise de Noirmoutiers (ci-devant madame de Sauves), to her private apartments in the palace.

Notwithstanding the conciliating graciousness

sciousness of her smile, our fair recluses felt at first a little intimidated by the manner of the marchioness, who, to the perfect self-possession of a court, united the advantages of a countenance and figure so dignified and commanding, that it was impossible not to experience a degree of awe mingled with the admiration she inspired. A robe of white damask, unadorned by jewels or embroidery, a small *livre d'heures*, depending from a black girdle, and a complexion "untouched by art," and of a dazzling but colourless fairness, all announced in the marquise de Noirmoutiers the court lady, whose mind was fixed upon higher objects, and who passed through the necessary duties of her station, without being contaminated by any of their frivolity.

Desirous of ascertaining the talents of the two girls, she made them touch the lute and sing for her, and then entered into familiar conversation with them,
 Upon

Upon asking them if reading did not form a great portion of their employment in the valley, Blanche replied, that it had been her father's great consolation, and that he had laboured to impart to her all the knowledge he possessed.

"And pray," said the marchioness, condescendingly, "what style of reading do you prefer?"

"The actions of great men and heroes," replied Blanche, the blood of the martyred Coligny and De Teligny unconsciously mantling in her cheek as she spoke.

"And you?" resumed madame de Noirmoutiers, addressing herself to Rose.

"I have an uncle, a noted poet," replied Rose, blushing still more brightly than Blanche; "and it is he that is to blame, if I declare myself a lover of poetry and song."

"I do not absolutely condemn either of those studies," said the marchioness, with

with a smile which just displayed her pearly rows of teeth, and the lovely dimple in her beautiful though colourless cheek; "when I was your age, I was but too much attracted by them; but time and religion have led to better thoughts: at present my favourite study is the Lives of the Saints."

She then talked of their future views and prospects, and regretted the degeneracy of the modern cavaliers, so far fallen from the high pretensions of the original institutions of chivalry, that faithlessness and inconstancy made up the sum of their amatory creed.—"Such you will meet," she said; "beings unworthy to fix the thoughts of a high-souled and delicate lady; but with Virtue for your guide, you may even steer safely through that perilous sea, Virtue, which shines the brighter the more severely she is tried."

The marchioness raised her fine eyes to heaven, as if reminded by this apostrophe

trouble of some severe trials she herself had in her youth endured, and then resumed the conversation with Rose and Blanche, who were delighted with the elevation and delicacy of her sentiments.

Madame de Noirmoutiers seemed to incline to the refinement and mysticism of the Petrarchal school, and to set a great store by the days of *la belle galanterie*, antique chivalry, and the "*arrets*" and decisions of the "*cours d'amour*;" but though unable always to follow her in her flights, Rose attributed this to the more advanced age, and possibly severer education of the marchioness.

After a long and delightful conversation, in which she had interwoven maxims of the purest morality, uttered in the most graceful and persuasive manner, she rose, saying, it was the time the queen would again require her attendance, and commended her guests to the care of two young ladies, who, during the latter part of her discourse, had entered

entered the apartment, but had remained, until this recommendation of the marchioness, fixed like statues to their embroidering frames. To these ladies the marchioness presented Rose and Blanche, and on her departure more particularly confided them to their care—
 “Great things are in agitation,” said she, turning to Rose and Blanche, with a smile full of sweetness and mystery; “much will depend on the report which I am now going to make to a certain exalted personage; and after the conversation we have had, *that* you may feel assured will be unfavourable.”

Rose and Blanche smiled in return at the gracious irony of this address; and the marchioness proceeded more seriously to inform them, that every crevice in the palace at that time being filled with guests, she trusted the fair sisters would be content to sleep in a closet within her own apartment, till the queen's pleasure was known concerning them—

“There

"There you will be immediately under my own eye," she added; "and I may be able often to spare you half-hours of serious discourse and instruction, which would be lost if we were separated by the tumult and hurry of the court."

With these words the marchioness having departed, the two lilies of the valley remained for a moment opposite the two court ladies. A silence prevailed, as if each party were measuring the strength and merit of the other.

One of these ladies was beautiful and majestic; the other was little, but possessed of a very handsome face, and was *petrie de graces*. Both were maids of honour to Catherine de Medicis; mademoiselle d'Ayelle, the tallest of the two (usually styled *la belle Grecque*) seemed to possess the cold and faultless perfection of a Greek statue; but that statue had eyes, and those haughty eyes were diligently employed in endeavouring to discover a fault in the newly-arrived fair ones.

ones. The large blue eyes of Emilie de Mignonville (the other honourable maiden) were, on the contrary, more agreeably directed, in entertaining a telegraphic correspondence with the beauties of the valley; and soon, with the happy "freemasonry of youth," as our inimitable and inexhaustible Scotch novelist has it, she had formed such an intimacy with them, by means of those beautiful indexes, that she addressed them with the frank cordiality of old acquaintance-ship, and seemed in a fair way of quickly possessing them of the *carte du pays*.—"We owe you many thanks," said she, archly glancing at mademoiselle d'Ayelle, for the excellent lecture on morality we have just had the pleasure of hearing—*that* was delivered expressly *for you*."

"Madam! said Blanche, colouring, and not understanding her.

"How delightful," resumed the demoiselle de Mignonville, "to see the marquise de Noirmoutiers school her
fine

fine eyes and lips, and utter choice sentences on honour, modesty, and virtue! She saw *their* charactery traced upon the fair brow of Blanche-la-belle, and wisely judged such discourse the only honey to catch *that* fly, and add her to the *escadron volant*.

Again Blanche was at a loss for her meaning.

"I have oft remarked to you, mademoiselle de Mignonville," said mademoiselle d'Ayelle, peevishly, "your uncourteous habit of giving *sobriquets* nicknames, such as 'Blanche-la-belle.' Sure I am, whether mademoiselle de Chastelar be to remain amongst us or not, she must mislike it."

"Nay," said Blanche, smiling, "it must be a peevish girl indeed who should take scorn at a *sobriquet* so gracious."

"And so suited too," said Rose, who had not lived long enough in the world to conceal the ingenuous admiration she felt for her soul's sister, and which she simply

simply thought must be shared by every one who beheld her.

Mademoiselle d'Ayelle, who had from jealousy objected to the appellation of *Blanche-la-belle*, because she felt assured, if once heard by the young chevaliers of the court, it would be caught up, and eagerly repeated, now proceeded to give such a picture of their *gouvernante*, the *marquise de Noirmoutiers*, that the two novices heard her in silent and shuddering wonder.

"Hush, hush!" said Emilie, with playful *malice*. "The marchioness's poor character has been gone every atom for years and years before we were born, I believe, and we should not inflict wounds upon the dead: the marchioness de Noirmoutiers, beloved at one time by the king of Navarre and the duke d'Alençon, encouraging both, and betraying both to the queen—*dans les règles*."

"Twere hard to keep the register of her

her conquests," resumed mademoiselle d'Ayelle; and here the young ladies began prompting one another, *à l'anier*, till their amusing recollections led them into an animated dialogue, set off by smiles, nods, and glances, but which soon became as unintelligible to our nymphs of the valley, as if it had been carried on in a different language. Every personage of the court was designated among these adepts by some significant name, or *sobriquet* (the practice which mademoiselle d'Ayelle had at first so strongly reprobated), and the whispers, the hints, and allusions, were made in a sort of "gipsy jargon," which is the password of the highest as well as the lowest coteries.

"Then came the '*war of the three Henries*,'" said mademoiselle de Mignonville; "but though she subdued the new man and the Spanish Barb, she was not a match for the Pleasing Impostor."

"*He bears a charmed heart*," returned
ed

ed mademoiselle d'Ayelle, "and escapes by some subtle magic from all snares laid for him."

"I marvel *who* can lay them," resumed mademoiselle de Mignonville—"a man, haughty, selfish, and tyrannical—a man so hated, even by those most near in blood to him, that it is *they* who have often apprized 'the Master' of his treasonable designs."

"Speak not so scornfully," cried mademoiselle d'Ayelle. "Deceiver though he be, fairer than you have owned his power."

Every one must have witnessed occasions in which highly-educated, accomplished, and generally well-informed women, have been reduced to the quality of ciphers, by the egotistical gossip of two fools, whose only advantage over them consisted in being skilled in the received, and elsewhere unintelligible, jargon of a court or a coterie. This was exactly the present situation of Rose

and Blanche, who were now reduced to the alternative of admiring one another, or catching up the precious hints of what was going forward at court, that occasionally fell from the lips of the maids of honour.

"And could you never guess," said mademoiselle de Mignonville, still pursuing the subject of madame de Noirmoutiers, "why she gave up the projected conquest of 'the Deaf Man?'"

"Trust me," returned mademoiselle d'Ayelle, "it is because the Deaf Man is no longer first in favour with the Master."

"And the paint and jewels are laid aside, and the missal and white robes of innocence assumed," returned the malicious Emilie, "to captivate *Chaperon Rouge*. Well, really those old beauties have no mercy on us young ones; they make up by art what they want in freshness, and will not leave a single swain to sigh in our chains."

Now, but for the dense ignorance in
which

which Rose and Blanche had been unhappily brought up, they would have known that the "Pleasing Impostor*" was a name given by the court ladies to Henry duke of Guise, and "The Spanish Barb," to Henry king of Navarre†; that "The Deaf Man" meant the duke de Joyeuse‡, so termed from his being afflicted, in a very slight degree, with that infirmity—"The Master," the king of France, and "Chaperon Rouge," some antiquated cardinal.

This trifling chat was now interrupted by the entrance of a lady, whom the maids of honour addressed by the title of madame de Duilly, wife to the seneschal of Lorraine. If Rose and Blanche had felt prepossessed by the manners and appearance of madame la marquise de Noirmoutiers, she was now totally eclipsed in their minds by the superior and youthful attractions of the lovely

F 2

Jeanne

* See De Thou. † Sully's Memoirs. ‡ Ibid.

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Jeanne de Vieilleville, for this lady was the daughter of Francis Scepeaux. She only wondered how so much youth and loveliness came to be united to so aged a man as the seneschal. The beauty of madame de Duilly reminded every beholder of the fresh-blown rose. But it was a rose bathed in showers ; and a certain habitual droop of the head, a soft melancholy in her fine eyes, and a voice subdued and plaintive, announced that in her person some dreadful sacrifice had been completed. She came to signify that the queen required the attendance of the two sisters ; and, as she conducted them into the royal presence, the encouraging urbanity of her manner, so unlike that of the demoiselles d'Ayelle and de Mignonville, effectually dispelled the little shade of depression that had stolen over the spirits of our two poor heroines.

Catherine de Medicis was in her private apartments (*petites apartemens*), conversing familiarly with the sieurs de Chastelar

Chastelar and de Vieilleville. Rose observed that her father's colour was unusually heightened, and that though there was an expression of pleasure on his countenance, the big tear trembled in his eye.

"Approach, my daughters," said the sire de Chastelar; "her majesty, preferring you to a crowd of noble maidens, honours me by proposing you should fill the vacant places left by the death of one noble lady, and the marriage of another, to attend upon her person. Such being her gracious dispositions, I have thought it my duty to inform her that Blanche boasts a double claim, as bearing one of the noblest names of France. Assist me to express my sense of her condescension, and my hope that you will fill the office worthy of your bringing up."

The sire de Chastelar pronounced this little harangue in a calm tone of voice; but his eyes contradicted his tongue,

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for they were turned, with a strange uncertainty of expression, upon the two daughters of his love.

Blanche felt that this was a crisis in her destiny. However her sound and penetrating mind might shew her that there was a great deal of evil mixed with any good that might exist in the court of Catherine de Medicis, yet a court destination was *that* which had been chalked out for her by her noble lover, the first and only chosen of her virgin heart. Henry, at parting, had in a manner announced this moment to her, and pointed out the symbol that should distinguish her present patroness. *How* he had interested the queen for her—*why* he had pointed out to her notice the valley of Lorraine (for Blanche was now satisfied that Catherine's passing through it was not accidental), were questions she could not answer at present. All she could guess was, that in all the steps he took, Henry's aim was
to

to bring her nearer to his own rank in life, and within the sphere of his own existence. The conviction that he remembered her, that he planned their reunion long beforehand, filled her heart with the most delightful emotions; and she accepted the queen's proffered favour, with a warmth and grace of manner that drew from all around expressions of admiration.

But there was *one* who, as Blanche announced her determination, felt his heart torn with conflicting passions; and forgetting the usages of a world to which he had been long a stranger—forgetting every thing but the prospect of returning to his cheerless home in solitude and desolation, the sire de Chastelar, dropping his tone of affected calmness, turned to Rose with wistful anguish in his look, and cried—“And will *you* too leave me?”

“No, my dearest father, never—never!” said Rose, dropping on one knee

before him, while she was only restrained by the presence of strangers from supporting with her filial arms his venerable head: "my lot is yours—for courts I am unfit." She then, in grateful but dignified terms, addressed the queen, and most respectfully declined her offered favour.

Yet still, through the grace of her deportment, some hideous recollection seemed to struggle with her gratitude, and to render her refusal more determined than it might otherwise have been. Blanche did not fail to observe this *nuance* in her sister's manner, and determined, before they were finally separated, to make one more effort to obtain from Rose the explanation of the mysterious expression recorded at the end of the second chapter.

CHAPTER V.

One night a revel had been held, and dance
And song had sounded in the ear of night,
And many a gallant that had grasp'd a lance,
And been the foremost in a bloody fight,
Then mov'd a measure with his ladye bright,
And press'd her jewell'd arm, and told his pain—
Alas ! that love should ever speak in vain !

Girl of Provence.

THE carrousel which took place at court the next morning was succeeded at night by a ball.

Although Rose de Chastelar was not destined, like Blanche, for a permanent residence among those gay scenes, she had been, with her father, courteously invited to make some stay ; and the sire de Chastelar, willing to postpone for her

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as long as possible the pain of parting, acceded to a short delay.

Queen Catherine had given particular directions that nothing should be neglected in the decoration of the two new beauties; and the marchioness de Noirmoutiers herself inspected their toilet. The fair strangers, by the queen's express desire, were presented with dresses of a different description, suited to their different style of beauty. Blanche was attired in a robe of white crape, spangled with silver stars, and fastened up with ropes of pearl, intermixed with bunches of lily of the valley. Rose, on the contrary, wore a cymar of white gauze over a slip of silver tissue, adorned with wreaths of the wild rose, or eglantine; and the fine turn of her neck, bust, and arms, were all marked by small roses fastening different parts of her dress.

Rose was among the first to descend into some of the decorated saloons of
the

the palace; and fancying herself quite alone, could not resist the pleasure of contemplating her own fresh and beautiful figure, thus embellished for the first time by art, and reflected in an immense Venetian mirror. She started on observing that the mirror gave a second form to her view; it was that of the Moor, who has been mentioned as bearing a part in the carrousel, and who now reclined his magnificent figure against a pillar, while his eyes were intently employed in contemplating the innocent delight of Rose.

Confused to be thus detected in an act of which her heart whispered to her the vanity, Rose drew back, and would have escaped.

“Nay, gaze on, fair flower,” said the Moor, in a voice of thrilling melody; “in all the court’s gay rose-garden, thou wilt not behold one so lovely as thyself.”

Touched by the flattery of the Moor,

who still wore his visor on, Rose was still more struck and thrilled by the superhuman sweetness of his voice ; she lingered, fascinated as if by that of an enchanter.—“ I am a stranger, not a sojourner here,” she said ; “ yet grieved should I be, sir Moor, to think *thy* judgment of the court were true. Many are the damsels there, I trust, who are worthier than I——”

Here the recollection of mesdemoiselles de Mignonville and d’Aylle came across her mind, and did not certainly increase her respect for the part of the court which consisted of the train of Catherine de Medicis.

“ Alas ! ” resumed the Moor, “ *who* so great a stranger as I ? a poor wanderer of the desert, I have *no* home ; yet I regret not my pilgrimages, since they thus enable me to worship at the shrine of innocence and beauty. To-night, surrounded by the flower of the court, you will forget your sable warrior, but
I shall

"I shall wear the rose of Lorraine in my heart."

Knowing that the knights were to appear at the ball in the dresses and characters they had supported at the carrousel (all excepting the armour), Rose felt satisfied that this seeming foreigner was, in reality, some gay, or at worst, some sentimental young cavalier of the court, whose language was adopted to suit his present garb.—"Nay," she replied, "I see no reason, sir knight, that of all men I should shew you scorn, only because you were the first here to offer me service."

"Then," resumed the Moor, "you will consent to yield me that fair hand in a *passamento d'Espagne* * before the night shall close?"

"Agreed," said Rose, gaily; "but on condition you unmask, for that visor is enough to frighten any Christian dame."

"And

* A dance of the solemn minuet kind.

"And yet a fair Venetian loved a Moor," muttered the stranger; "but I accept the compact; and on condition I unmask, you promise me your hand?"

"On condition you unmask, sir Moor, it is yours."

"For a *passamento d'Espagne*?"

"Be it so—for a *passamento d'Espagne*."

"Let me claim you by your colours."

"I am not a court lady—I give no colours."

"Then by some other token."

Rose detached from her dress one rosebud of the eglantine wreath.

The Moor caught the fair hand that extended it to him, and in spite of his visor contrived to press it to his lips.

Confused and angry, Rose hastily withdrew it, and began to fear she had caught the infectious gaiety of a court life, in thus encouraging the conversation of a young cavalier whom she only
knew

knew by his distinguished grace in the lists.

At this moment the marquise de Normoutiers entered, with an unusual air of hilarity and triumph in her looks, as if some agreeable incident had just happened to her. She announced to Rose that not a moment was to be lost in presenting her to the other august branches of the court, previous to the festivities of the evening beginning.

Rose, hastily drawing on her glove, and bestowing on her new admirer an almost imperceptible glance of forgiveness, gaily glided with the marchioness from the anti-room to the presence-chamber.

The court of Lorraine presented an interesting assemblage. Rose and Blanche had yet to be presented to the duchess dowager of Lorraine, who, on account of the early youth of her son and daughter-in-law, still maintained the ascendancy in the administration of the little state.

state. The appearance of this lady was pleasing and venerable. As lilies and roses in the cheeks, and all the gay tints of the butterfly in the dress, were esteemed in those enlightened times the peculiar appendages of youth, the dowager duchess of Lorraine, though a great princess, was dressed with a striking sobriety. A robe of the richest, but gravest tissue, adorned her once majestic, but now bending figure; while a black hood, and a flat cap, adorned with some rich jewels, the appendages of rank, not the mantraps of coquetry, formed the attire of her head. Near her side, and a little below the canopy of state allotted for the queen and the duchess dowager, was placed the amiable Claude, wife of the reigning duke of Lorraine, and daughter of Catherine de Medicis. The countenance of the young princess, gay, open, and ingenuous, was the mirror of the virtues of her mind. Unlike her hapless sister Isabella, consort of Philip the

Second

Second of Spain—unlike her still more gifted sister Margaret, consort of the king of Navarre, the conversation of Claude was distinguished rather for gracious sweetness than dazzling wit; her features possessed more of benignant expression than of positive beauty. But how happy, compared to that of either of her sisters, was her lot! to that of Margaret of Valois, restless, intriguing, ambitious, accustomed to live in the midst of a political hurricane; to be by turns the oppressor and the oppressed—the active, beautiful, but imprudent Margaret of Valois; she to whom a prison was as familiar as a palace; now the theme of every poet's praise—now condescending to patronise, or even to rival those poets; at times caressed and courted, but more often insulted and slighted! Such must be the fate of every woman who forfeits her natural position in society, and prefers exciting admiration to commanding esteem.

Still

Still more unenviable was the lot of the bright-eyed Isabella; she whose fatal charms awoke a tyrant's rage, and hurried on the ruin of the hapless don Carlos and her own. Beloved by her husband, valued by his mother, and the idol of the court of which she was the centre, Claude of Lorraine was destined to furnish another example of the superior value of steady virtues over brilliant faculties in women.

On the entrance of our two heroines, they were acknowledged, each, by the young duchess, with a gracious smile of recognition: she presented them herself to the duke, her husband, and thus completed the ceremony of their introduction to the court.

This multiplicity of presentations, and the embarrassment inseparable from a first production before so imposing an assembly, brought the brilliant blushes in almost unintermitted succession upon the cheek of Rose de Chastelar, which, heightening

heightening the beauty of her hazel eyes, and hair of a golden auburn, rendered her an object too strikingly lovely to be contemplated without danger. Blanche de Teligny, on the contrary, possessed more self-command, and seemed formed by nature for the station she was appointed to fill.

A murmur of admiration ran round among the young, while the older courtiers remarked to each other, that she could be compared to none but their long-remembered Mary, niece of the duke of Lorraine, once styled by them, from her widowed garb of white crape and lovely paleness, "*La Reine Blanche*," but better known to us as Mary Queen of Scots.

A sympathy of tastes and character attracted Blanche to the side of the amiable madame de Duilly, and she soon ceased to wonder at what she had reckoned an unequal match, on perceiving that it was to the young count de Duilly,
not

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not to the old seneschal of Lorraine, she was united ; the count being heir to the seneschal, and appointed to be his successor, was sometimes named by that title, and thence had arisen her mistake.

The knights wore their mistress's colours—carnation, orange, black, violet, couleur-de-feu, and innumerable others ; but those who particularly distinguished themselves as the queen's knights, and bore on their scarves of azure the "*arc-en-ciel*," seized that pretext to surround the lovely Blanche.

Meanwhile Rose's knight, to whom she had refused to name her colours, claimed her by the eglantine bud ; and she, having exacted from him the removal of his visor, readily granted him her hand.

The knight removed his visor, as had been agreed upon ; but to her utter astonishment and confusion, the face that appeared beneath the visor was black as the mask that had concealed it ; and Rose found that she had been her own dupe.

dupe, in persuading herself she beheld in him a European knight. Yet still his uncommonly handsome features, noble mien, eyes of diamond, and teeth of pearl, gave him such a lustre of beauty, that she was obliged to confess, no white cavalier in the room equalled, in personal appearance, her magnificent Moor. Still her aversion to exhibiting in public with a figure so singular was insurmountable, and she could not forbear making him some reproaches for his deceit.

"I did not deceive you," said the Moor, coolly.

"Nay," observed Rose, "well you know I took you for a knight of France; nor can I now guess what you make here, being a stranger."

"I came to negotiate with Catherine de Medicis for a kingdom, for Alençon her son, and accommodated myself to your manners; and so pleasing was my sojourn in France, I continued,

tinued, even after his death, to reside there*. My face is not blacker than my heart; and yet, if I please, I can make you in love both with the one and the other."

"Nay, now, Saracen," said Rose, drawing back, offended, "you assume again the privilege of the mask; but not to render myself conspicuous, and yet to redeem my pledge, though I will not dance the *passamento* with you, which would attract all eyes upon us, I will suffer you to lead me out among the couples that dance the *lavolta*."

The Moor smiled, as in scorn, at the distinction; and bending assent, left her, and mingled in the crowd.

After

* Thuanus relates, that Catherine de Medicis, whose favourite son was the duke d'Alençon, was so anxious that this prince should possess a crown as well as his brothers, that she dispatched François de Noailles to Selim, emperor of the Turks, to demand the kingdom of Algiers for her son, being probably of Satan's opinion—

"Better to reign in hell, than serve in heaven."

After the formal and minuet-like *pas-samento d'Espagne* had been danced by a sufficient number of distinguished couples, a livelier and sweeter strain of music, and a general movement among the cavaliers, announced that they were choosing their fair partners for the more pleasing volta. The Moor claimed, with solemnity, the hand of Rose. Blanche was taken out by the young count de Duilly, who, although married to a most charming woman, was still conspicuous for the constancy and success with which he always selected the greatest beauty of the night, and made her the object of all his temporary attentions.

Blanche observed, with some surprise, that his beautiful consort evinced no inclination to join the dance.—“ Does not madame de Duilly dance the volte de Provence?” she asked, for such was the name of the performance in which they were now preparing to exhibit.

“ Ah,

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" Ah ! no," she replied, tears starting into her eyes ; " ask me not, I pray you."

There was something in the tone and look which accompanied these few words, conveying more than met the ear.

Irresistibly interested in madame de Duilly, Blanche, as soon as she could disengage herself from her husband, placed herself by her side ; and no one being present with whom she felt a desire to dance, conversed with her the rest of the night.

CHAP.

CHAPTER VI.

Tell me, thou common Father—tell me why,
Since thou art just and good, dost thou permit
Successful Fraud securely thron'd to sit,
While Innocence, oppress'd, stands weeping by ?

BOWRING'S Selections.

THE next morning Blanche had to endure a little lecture from madame de Noirmoutiers, for her apparent intimacy with madame de Duilly. Blanche alleged the recommendation of the sire de Chastelar, who had discovered her to be the charming Jeanne de Vieilleville, whom he had at first imagined to be married to the count de Saulx.—“ My father,” she said, “ commended that lady to me as the daughter of the sieur de Vieilleville, his oldest friend, and the no-

bleman through whose favour we alone appear at court."

"But know you," resumed the marquise de Noirmoutiers, "that the countess de Duilly is utterly lost to reputation, and it is only through the favour of the duchess, and the respect shewn to her father's great services, that she still holds her place in the circle?"

Blanche was petrified at this intelligence, and timidly exclaimed—"Is it possible that, with such a modest, such a prepossessing exterior, the countess de Duilly should conceal conduct so base?"

"It is *not* concealed," replied the marquise, "or I might not, perchance, have thought it so necessary to warn you against her." She then continued, in a more natural tone, for she found it impossible long to continue to 'play the saint'—"It is true that a woman may be so unhappily married, and so distinguished for wit and beauty, as to find it impossible to escape the dangers of the world ;

world; and, in such a case, it is not for once, or perhaps *twice*, having been misled by the weakness of her heart, that, if she observes the rules of decorum, she should be excluded from society. But the countess de Duilly has absolutely set those rules at defiance, and for that reason, mademoiselle de Teligny, I forbid you to frequent her."

Though somewhat prepared for this transformation in the marquise by the railleries of the maids of honour, Blanche felt so shocked by this convenient court morality, that she was unable to reply.

The marquise de Noirmoutiers, on the contrary, quite satisfied with the impression she supposed she had made, left the room with this sententious declaration; and nearly at the same moment the countess de Duilly entered it. Several of the maids of honour, who were also present, in order to shew they could avail themselves of the lessons of the marquise de Noirmoutiers, marked, by their

manner, that they followed her example in neglecting and slighting the young countess. Injurious whispers began to circulate along the line, looks and nods were interchanged, and no attempt was made to rise at her approach, though it happened that every seat was occupied.

During this interval, Blanche could not forbear looking with admiration at the countess de Duilly. Beautiful, serene, and surpassing the females that insulted her, as much by the charms of her person as by the elegance of her deportment, she looked round the circle with a smile that would have disarmed malice itself of its sting, and seemed determined not to believe it possible that an affront could be intended to her. Blanche was new to a court, but she had an unerring guide in the penetration of her mind, and the rectitude of her own sentiments. To look at that angelic countenance, she could not believe Jeanne de Vieilleville guilty.—“But even

even supposing her for a moment to be so," Blanche argued with herself, "still were it shame that I should suffer a scorn to be cast upon the daughter of the noble benefactor of the valley of Lorraine." Thinking thus, she rose, and, with a courteous action, offered the countess her seat.

Madame de Duilly accepted it, and entering into discourse with Blanche, soon contrived to make her perceive she understood the cabal formed against her, and appreciated the courage and kindness of those that resisted it.

The young court ladies, soon perceiving that madame de Duilly came from the duchess of Lorraine, and discoursed with Blanche of some court arrangement of which they were ignorant, thought it best to descend from their assumed reserve, and the conversation soon became general.

In the evening Blanche observed in the circle that madame de Duilly was

not only distinguished by the particular favour of the reigning duchess, but that the venerable duchess dowager of Lorraine addressed her occasionally with marked and distinguished graciousness.

Satisfied by these observations how unfounded were the calumnies of the marchioness, she no longer interposed the degree of reserve she had in the morning still thought necessary. When she had behaved towards the countess de Duilly with that courtesy which others so shamefully neglected, Blanche had then abstained in her manner from evincing any desire for intimacy. By this union of prudence and candour (an example which it were to be wished her sex would more frequently follow), Blanche prevented herself from being deceived by the machinations of an artful enemy, and acquired a lovely and amiable friend. She observed indeed that the marchioness de Noirmontiers and the countess de Duilly had

had "*une petite haine de cour bien prononcée*" for each other, and that the marchioness continued to have interest enough to cause madame de Duilly to meet many slights in the circle of Catherine de Medicis.

As soon as she could summon courage to advert to the tragic catastrophe which for a time had cast a cloud over her reputation, and which had saddened her life for ever, madame de Duilly confided to Blanche the particulars of a history that would have furnished the groundwork of a melancholy romance. Jeanne de Vieilleville had been addressed at the same time by the count de Duilly and the count de Saulx. The latter had her own and her father's approbation; the former that of her mother, of the princess Claude, and of the king and queen of France. The representations of friends, and her affection for the princess Claude, who, in consequence of her own destination by marriage, most ar-

dently desired she should wed a nobleman of Lorraine, induced her at length to give her hand to the count de Duilly. The only stipulation her father made on this disappointment of his own and his daughter's secret wishes was, that the dangerous count de Saulx should never visit Lorraine.

At the court of Lorraine new disgusts awaited her. Madame de Noirmoutiers was also of the party, and soon obtained complete possession of her husband's ductile mind. Her life was embittered by the misconduct of these two persons; her spirits drooped; her health declined.

In the mean time, De Saulx, who had loved her with all the ardour of a passionate Provençal, heard some flying reports of her unhappiness, determined to satisfy himself respecting her situation, and, regardless of the constructions that might be formed upon it, determined on visiting Lorraine. He presented himself

himself unexpectedly to her in the gardens of the palace.

Agitated by surprise, and weakened by grief, the unhappy Jeanne de Vieilleville confessed to him, that all he had heard of her sufferings was but too true; and it was in the moment of imprecating vengeance upon her oppressors, that the count de Saulx beheld the count de Duilly and madame de Noirmoutiers approach the arbour where he had surprised from Jeanne a confession so inimical to her peace.

The consequences of this meeting were dreadful; the count de Duilly taunted De Saulx with his breach of promise. The count de Saulx was not of a temper calmly to bear these reproaches. They drew, but De Saulx, weakened by sickness and sorrow, was no match for the jealous count de Duilly.

The young countess Jeanne saw her ill-fated lover fall, bathed in blood, at

her feet. Her reason threatened to desert her at this dire catastrophe.

The cruel Noirmoutiers, so far from being touched with the calamities which owed their origin to her vile insinuations, availed herself of this tragic scene to ruin the reputation of the countess at court. But Jeanne was supported by her father, and the duchesses of Lorraine; and the recall of madame de Noirmoutiers to the court of Catherine de Medicis, and a formal reconciliation effected by the influence of the court between herself and her husband, restored the fair fame of the young and injured countess. Still nothing could heal the deep wound inflicted on her heart. In the shortlived days of her youthful happiness, De Saulx had invented for her a dance, called the "*Volte de Provence*." It is not to be wondered that, since his untimely end, she had for ever declined that once favourite amusement.

Such was the substance of the conversations

sations of Jeanne de Vieilleville with Blanche de Teligny. While administering the sweetest consolation to her sorrows, Blanche found the greatest benefit from the acquaintance of the young countess; her painfully-acquired knowledge of the world, and perfect familiarity with the habits of courts, were a perpetual source of improvement to Blanche in her new situation; and under her young and lovely preceptress, she daily acquired graces that rendered her worthy to play a conspicuous part in the sphere to which she was promoted.

The moment now arrived for her first separation from her beloved Rose. Desirous of elucidation upon a point on which she had of late been silent, Blanche pressed Rose to explain herself the last night they passed together. After a moment's hesitation—"Tell me truly," she said, "what meant you by the word 'sorceress,' as applied to the lady who

has discovered herself to be the queen, and whom I am bound to serve?"

Rose attempted to laugh off the impression.—“If she was a sorceress, she has proved, you see, a sorceress of good,” she replied. Then, growing more serious, she continued, in a suppressed voice —“I am willing to believe, my Blanche, that my fears magnify the danger. As for the rest, a solemn oath binds me; it is one that was extorted from me, and never have I known perfect peace since I have had aught concealed from you.”

“Enough,” said Blanche, tenderly; “great shame it were that I disturbed your mind, now that it requires all its strength to endure to-morrow’s parting.”

With these words the gentle girls commended each other to repose. But the morning shewed that Rose had rested but little; and when the sire de Chastelar announced himself in readiness for departure, she clung to Blanche’s bosom,

bosom, as if nothing but force could separate them. His adieus to Blanche were scarcely less affecting.—“Child of my adoption,” he cried, “I leave you in the midst of dangers, opposed to which prudence is often vain; but virtue in the end must prevail; conform not to a corrupt court, but rather let your example shame it. Daughter of Louise de Coligny, surely you can never affix a stain upon your mother’s memory. The rank, the power, and state of a duchess de Valentinois fade before the glory that encircles the fair and virtuous maiden.”

Blanche received these admonitions with respect, but knew not there would quickly come a time when she should need them: she knew not the variety of dangers life offers to the view—lures for the tender and weak, gilded baits for the lofty and ambitious.

“Farewell, my dearest child,” resumed the sire de Chastelar, while solemnly blessing her. “Through every scene

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scene that thou art doomed to pass, be
innocence thy guide, and Providence
thy hope ; and though example should
invite, and temptation should assail thee,
cling to the path of duty.

**‘ FAIS CE QUE DOIS
ADVIENNE QUE POURRA.’**

CHAP.

CHAPTER VII.

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Sheath'd in the glittering pomp of war,  
Bright as its red and threatening star,  
Yet mild as Hesper's dewy light,  
He comes—the hero of the fight!  
That regal port, that bearing high,  
The graceful mien, the sparkling eye,  
The smile that chas'd each cloud afar,  
All told—'twas Henry of Navarre.

*The Tournament, a masque.*

WHILE Rose de Chastelar, following her father's humble fortunes, returned with him to the valley of Lorraine, and the more brilliant, not the happier, destiny of Blanche retained her in the service of a court, the lot of *him* by whose influence, secretly exerted, this momentous change was accomplished, was cast in far different scenes.

We

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We have seen the duke de Joyeuse, in the first chapter of the first volume, setting out at the head of a brilliant army, with the determination of subduing the hitherto invincible king of Navarre. Foiled at that juncture, and compelled to disband his troops, he now found himself, a second time, in the command of a still more powerful force, and once again took the field against Henry, in the full determination of achieving his ruin. The design of the king of Navarre, which was to keep on the defensive till reinforced by the junction with his German auxiliaries upon the Loire, was frustrated by the sleepless activity of the duke de Joyeuse, whose grand object was to force Henry to give battle before he could effect this junction; and so perseveringly did he follow up this plan, that Henry at length found the unequal combat inevitable, and the two armies met upon the plains of Coutras.

The

The morning sun, which shone brilliantly upon the forces of the duke de Joyeuse, glanced upon beaming helmets and dancing plumes, scarves embroidered by the hands of high-born beauty, and costly velvet mantles covered with gold and silver, the glitter of which was only rivalled by that of the warriors' polished Damascene blades.

The troops of Joyeuse (consisting in great part of lancers) were distinguished by the beauty and docility of their fiery steeds, which bespoke their careful training in the *manège*; and all that the union of loyalty and gallantry, of courtesy and chivalrous ardour, could inspire, glowed in the breasts of the inexperienced, but daring youths, who formed the flower of this courtly army.

That of the king of Navarre, on the contrary, had the advantage in discipline, experience, and the cause of truth and liberty for which he fought. No unnecessary pomp encumbered his array;



ray; but he was surrounded by veteran troops, who bore the scars of many a well-won field. The race of Valois being likely to become extinct with the present reigning monarch, Henry the Third, the king of Navarre, was revered and cherished by a great part of France, as heir presumptive to that crown which he ultimately inherited. He was seconded in the battle by three princes of the blood, his near relatives—the princes of Condé and Conti, who joined him from conformity of views and principles, and the count of Soissons, who was further animated with the sweeter hope of being rewarded, if successful, with the hand of the king's sister, the princess Catherine of Navarre.

Amid the mass of floating plumage and waving banners, splendid housings and silver crosses, that dazzled the eye, in whichever direction it turned to view the courtly army of Joyeuse, let us select three figures grouped apart from  
from

from the main body of the army, and each sufficiently worthy to fix the attention by themselves.

The first of these warriors, who was distinguished by his gaiety and good mien, and who bore in his housings and armour the revenues of a principality, was the gay, gallant, courtly favourite, the duke de Joyeuse in person. Like Henry of Navarre, his own family furnished him with firm and proud supporters: his two brothers, the affectionate Claude de Saint Sauveur, and the devout but daring Henri de Joyeuse, rallied, a living rampart around him. Fond of his family, proud of his sovereign's favour, and blest in the recent attainment of peerless beauty and a princely heritage, combined in the person of a rich and lovely heiress, the spirits of Joyeuse (naturally high and daring) now revelled in the excess of a bridegroom's exultation, and (like all his gallant army) choosing some appropriate motto

motto and device, his shield bore the impress of the objects of his devotion. It was a field azure, covered with roses and lilies, emblems of the fair and of the empire of France, and the concise and gallant device was—" *Tout pour eux et pour elles.*"

The second cavalier leant upon his sword, while engaged in familiar conversation with the duke de Joyeuse. Contrasted with that of Joyeuse, which was white and silver, the armour of this knight was sable, adorned with a profusion of pearls; and when, in the manner of one rather accustomed to brave danger than hardship, he raised from his fair features the weighty casque of war, the stately and majestic form, the beautiful hand, and *superbe chevelure*, would at once have distinguished him among a thousand. His cry in the battle was "Blanche-la-Belle!"

A little apart from these two, a knight in green was making observations upon  
Henry's

Henry's army.—“ By our Lady !” cried the duke de Joyeuse, as he contemplated their martial array, “ trust me not, my lord, if the king of Navarre is not the youngest man in his own army. Look at those iron faces and buff jerkins—surely they are the remains of the old campaigners of Jarnac and Montcontour.”

“ The king of Navarre sets no store by bravery of apparel,” observed the knight in green; “ and was wont to say of the gallants who would flaunt it at court at the expence of their estates, that on every gala day they bore a forest of trees on their backs.”

“ It is well that his broad lands are of more value than his array,” resumed Joyeuse, disdainfully; “ for with God's good aid, ere sunset they are mine.”

Though accustomed to the precipitation and pride that accompanied the buoyant spirits of the confident Joyeuse, his two companions were unprepared

pared for this last stroke of vanity and presumption. Indeed in this age it can hardly be believed, if it were not vouch-ed for as an historical fact, that the duke de Joyeuse was so assured of victory over the Hugonots on the fatal morning of Coutras, that he had actually obtained from pope Sextus the Fifth the confiscation of Henry's sovereign domains.

"Duke de Joyeuse, you have a proverb against you," muttered the knight in green; but the observation was made in rather a lower tone than that in which the rest of the discourse was held; "they say we should not sell the skin of the bear."

At this moment the general hastily called for his horse. The fair knight in black armour, and the knight in green (Cadet le Perle and his attached Florestan), remained an instant alone together.

"Ah, my lord," exclaimed Florestan,  
dropping

dropping the tone of quaint and caustic humour with which he had addressed Joyeuse, "what is that I see yonder?"

"What do you see?" resumed Cadet le Perle, rather impatiently; "you see the king of Navarre, haranguing his troops for battle; and *vive Dieu!* we will shew them we are ready to give them a warm reception. Oh, how my heart glows at this approach to the completion of its dearest wishes! Give me but to meet Henry of Navarre in single fight, and the next moment let my banner be converted into my shroud!"

As he spoke the countenance of Cadet le Perle assumed that haughty and heroic expression which it sometimes, though rarely exhibited; and this gentle and graceful being, whom a common observer would have pronounced fitter to figure in courts alone, was suddenly transformed into the warrior breathing menace and death.

"You fight for revenge and glory,  
my

my lord," resumed Florestan, with another deep sigh; "but for what do *I* engage?—which side can I wish to prevail? Mark you yon warrior on the silver roan—he who now bends over his proud steed's neck, to receive some order from Henry of Navarre?—oh God! it is Maximilian!—it is my brother!—he who in youth supplied a parent's place, and who now perhaps may receive his death-wound from my parricide hand!"

"These scruples are ill-timed," Cadet le Perle mildly resumed. "If Maximilian be in the service of Henry of Navarre, is not your brother Philip in that of Henry of Valois?—and if you, for your part, have chosen the service of —"

"Enough, enough, my gracious master!" resumed the volatile, inconsistent, and unhappy Florestan, kissing the princely hand that the disguised warrior extended to him. "I *have* chosen, and I do *not* repent!—But, oh, gracious Providence,

vidence, guide my hand far from my brother in the mortal fight!"

The cry to arms was now heard; the warriors flew to their several posts. Florestan, who preserved a tender remembrance of the guiltless and happy days he had spent in the Glass Valley with Rose de Chastelar, chose for his battle-cry "*la Fleur d'Epine!*" in mystic allusion to her name; and every warrior of the royalist army, putting himself into the lists, might have been encouraged in the words of the minstrel—

"Now, gallant, for your lady's sake!"

for the graceful and intrepid flower of the young French nobility, that composed the strength of Joyeuse's army, rushed on to battle as they would have done to a festival, and seemed to feel as if in the actual presence of beauty, "raining influence" by her smiles, and distributing the rewards of glory.

Nothing could resist the shock of such



tumultuous valour. The first charge forced the Protestant lines. The king of Navarre had the anguish to behold his noblest chiefs—to behold Turenne and La Tremouille give way before the impetuosity of Joyeuse, seconded by the fair but sable-vested knight, who, giving his services to the royal army, in the quality of a volunteer, reserved to himself the power of moving from place to place in the battle, and breasting danger wherever she appeared united to the promise of glory.

Then was the struggle, the deadly strife of civil war; the unnatural conflict, in which not only the father might fight against the son, the brother against the brother, and the dearest relations of life be violently rent asunder, by those very hands that, in happier times, would have rejoiced to draw their sacred bands the closest; but those who professed the same opinions on the awful points connected with their eternal welfare, those  
 who

who had "walked together to the house of God in company," found themselves, in the battle, ranged on different sides; for the king of Navarre's army was composed almost equally of Protestants and Catholics; and even that of the duke of Joyeuse possessed a considerable number of the former persuasion in its ranks.

But now the moment was arrived for conduct and experience to assert its claim over daring but undisciplined valour. Already the Hugonots deemed the day was lost—already the Catholics had shouted victory! when a tremendous discharge of artillery, under the direction of Maximilian de Bethune, baron de Rosny, threw disorder into their ranks, and mowed down chiefs and soldiers in one indiscriminate destruction.

Now for the first time the boastful Joyeuse discovered that he had committed a capital error, in placing his artillery so injudiciously, that it was of

little or no service in repelling the well-calculated attack of the enemy. But, like most characters of his description, instead of endeavouring to remedy or atone for this oversight, with his good fortune his presence of mind seemed to forsake him.

No longer giving any but confused or contradictory orders, he left the remaining chance of victory to the king of Navarre, who, with the prince of Condé and the count de Soissons, scoured the field, reanimating the flagging spirits of the Hugonots, and performing in their own single persons those prodigies of valour, which, in our more calculating days, seem to belong less to history than to romance. Wherever the battle raged hottest, *there* the white plume (the *bouquet de plumes blanches*), by which Henry of Navarre was always distinguished, shook like a meteor, threatening instant death. Wherever that white plume waved from the beaming casque, *there* the knight of the fair and waving hair sought

sought Henry of Navarre—sought in him his mortal enemy ; and still as he turned his fiery steed to meet him, some power, superior to both, seemed to interpose and avert the rencounter, as if anxious to preserve for future fellowship and love, two brave and gallant spirits, that only required to be better known, and judged more justly, in order to rush into each other's embraces.

It was on one of these occasions that the faithful warriors of Henry of Navarre attempted to form a rampart around him of their bodies.—“ Stand back !” he exclaimed—“ stand back, my friends, I pray you. Would you eclipse me ? Let my sun shine forth !”

At length the discouragement of the Catholic army was complete. At this prospect of total discomfiture, Joyeuse seemed no longer to retain possession of himself. As he rapidly traversed the field, endeavouring in vain to rally his flying forces, his look, his voice, his gestures,

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tures, announced the madness of horror and despair.—“Traitors! is this your loyalty? Distraction! Will ye let the sacred banners of the Cross fall into heretic hands?—Oh my abused master!—oh my lost *Amenàide*!—Perish! ruined *Joyeuse*! They obey thy voice no more!”

He said truly. Vainly was he heard, in alternate menace and supplication: the army he had hurried to destruction no longer acknowledged him as their chief. The friends, the brothers in arms with whom he had deemed himself invincible, lay stretched around him upon the bloody plain; his favourite brother, *Claude de Saint Sauveur*, a corpse at his feet; his other brother, *Henry*, a prisoner, or dead: the Catholic general now gave himself up entirely to despair. In vain *Cadet le Perle* tried to rouse him—that youthful hero, who still fought by his side, and who throughout the various chances of the battle had still carried

carried victory whichever way he turned his arms.—“Courage, my lord!” he cried—“courage, and it may yet be well with you.”

Joyeuse pointed to the bleeding body of Claude de Saint Sauveur, and made him no other reply.

“To-morrow we will mourn your gallant brother,” the princely warrior resumed; “to-day we must avenge him.—Rouse, rouse yourself, Joyeuse—all may not be lost; consider what yet remains to be done.”

“One thing remains,” replied the wretched Joyeuse; “yes, one thing yet remains for us to do—to die!” and rushing into the thickest of the battle, he soon found, on the points of his enemies’ weapons, the remedy for his woes and for his shame.

Thus perished, by the misconduct of one individual, the most gallant army that had ever been assembled in France. The plain was covered with Catholic

dead, and with the scattered wrecks of rich habits, weapons, and standards, that but an hour before had made such a glorious show. At the beginning of the discomfiture of the Catholics, a Hugonot warrior was observed riding impetuously across the plain: he was mounted on a silver roan; but the silver spots that had adorned the sable flanks of the war-horse were now changed for gouts of blood; yet still he bore his master over the field, where he often bent to inspect, with anxious solicitude, the countenances of the dying and the dead, among the scattered army of Joyeuse. At length he met the object of his search—the knight in green, not flying, but hastily wheeling round to receive the expected rencounter.—“Yield! you are my prisoner!” cried the elder knight, in a trembling voice.

“Not while I have life!” the younger one replied.

He gave a second look, dropped the  
reins,

reins, and in an instant both had alighted, and were strictly clasped in a fraternal embrace.

Florestan was the first to speak.—“All is then lost indeed; but I am free from guilt. Readily then I yield myself a prisoner to the dear confinement of a brother’s arms.”

By nature calm, and habituated to check his feelings, the elder knight was silent for a moment, as if, on finding his younger brother safe and unharmed, he had been ashamed of the solicitude, which was the real motive that led him, towards the close of the battle, to scour the enemy’s squadrons; but nature at length prevailed; and though he had many causes of complaint against Florestan, they were all for the moment laid aside in the tumults of this joyous recognition.

Maximilian, baron de Rosny (afterwards universally known as the celebrated duke of Sully), was the one

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among



among the Hugonot officers who enjoyed the greatest portion of his master's affection ; although so careful was Henry not to create jealousies and divisions among his friends, that he often affected in public to treat him with indifference, and even with coldness. The baron de Rosny was attached from principle and conviction to the purer tenets of the reformed faith. In youth Florestan de Bethune had followed in his footsteps, and it was with the deepest grief he had afterwards beheld this favourite brother, lured by the splendours and promises of the court of Henry the Third, choose another master, and abjure the holy and simple form of worship in which he had been educated. Follies innumerable, dissipations, and neglect of his brother's advice, had been the consequence of the new ties Florestan had formed ; consequently Maximilian, though delighted, by any means in his power, to have recovered the prodigal he deplored, determined

ed it his duty to impose a check upon his feelings, till he had discovered how far the heart of Florestan was really corrupted by the torrent of bad examples to which he had been exposed.

The two brothers were now alone together in the quarters of the baron de Rosny; and some refreshments having been hastily placed before Florestan, Maximilian pressed him to partake of them with a soldier's frankness of heart.—“I shall think you consider yourself as indeed a prisoner,” he said, “if you refuse to do honour to our cheer.”

Though by nature light and volatile, a variety of painful emotions prevented Florestan from being more at ease than his brother, after the first feeling of mutual satisfaction had subsided; he was abashed and dejected by the total discomfiture of his party, and, above all, anxious and uncertain respecting the fate of the beloved master for whose

sake he had quitted every thing—of Cadet le Perle.

“Fortune has played a cruel game with us this day,” at length he said; “and I cannot choose but mourn the consequences of errors, some of which I saw, but had not power to prevent. I mourn the loss of so many gallant knights sacrificed to one man’s vain and selfish hopes—I mourn the blow that chivalry has in our persons received. Yet still, mingled with our bitter shame, there is some sweetness in finding myself once more under your roof, my brother; it makes me almost fancy those times restored, when your instructions supplied a father’s place.”

Maximilian sighed bitterly: Florestan had touched a string which, for his own sake, he ought to have avoided. Maximilian thought of that dead father who had so solemnly recommended his youngest born to his care—he thought of the utter disappointment of all the hopes  
he

he had so fondly cherished ; and unwilling, in the singular predicament in which he stood, to utter reproaches, he preserved a mournful silence.

“ Ah, Maximilian,” resumed Florestan, “ what a long cessation there has been in our correspondence ! Had you continued to aid me with your counsels, I might have sooner checked myself in the career of folly—had you but——”

“ How could I continue to obtrude counsels that were unwelcome ?” interrupted Maximilian, impatiently. “ No, no, Florestan—when I saw you prefer the promises of a Machiavelian queen to our Hugonot frankness—when I saw you run headlong into the snares of folly and pleasure by which she surrounds herself, I knew at once all I had to anticipate—that you would prove unfaithful to your king and to your God.”

“ Oh, spare me, Maximilian !” exclaimed Florestan ; “ I *have* been all that you say ; but I have long abjured follies

follies which I ever detested in my heart; it is long since I have mingled in the frivolities and superstitions of the French court—since I have made one of the parties of devotion, or parties of pleasure, that succeed one another under its contemptible monarch. Though serving to-day in the army of the unfortunate duke de Joyeuse, the master under whose independent banners I fought is young, amiable, and generous, as he is right royal; and it is uncertainty of his fate, as well as sorrow for the past, that now clouds the hour of meeting with the brother I have so long deplored.”

“And may I ask the name of this new master?” said the baron de Rosny, the austerity of his former aspect relaxing into a smile.

“Pardon me, Maximilian,” replied Florestan; “but it is a secret he alone has a right to reveal; and if he has fallen to-day, it must be buried in my bosom.”

As

As he gave utterance to this agonizing supposition, the countenance of Florestan evinced the anguish and agitation of his mind; and the baron de Rosny, the man in the world best qualified, by his own experience, to judge of the merit of devoted friendship in another, rose, and no longer combated the feelings that impelled him once more to rush to his long-lost brother's embrace. —“Enough, Florestan,” he exclaimed; “be this prince who he may, he has in thee a tried and gallant friend. All is not lost, since you preserve your probity—that sense of honour and inviolable fidelity that is to us as the breath of life. Your principles have escaped the wreck, and we will yet spend happy days together, with my Charlotte, at the chateau de Rosny.”

At the name of Charlotte, Florestan shuddered; but De Rosny was too much taken up with the new and gracious feelings which he now suffered to penetrate to his

his

his heart, to observe the passing emotion. —“ We must shorten the time we spend together,” he resumed, “ for duty now calls me to my master, where I trust in God, dear Florestan, we may hear some good tidings of *yours*. The king has not yet supped—will you trust me once more to present you to him?”

“ Ah, Maximilian, that I had never chosen any other guide!”

The baron de Rosny and the chevalier de Bethune rose together on saying these words, and together sought the quarters of Henry of Navarre.

## CHAPTER VIII.

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La prospérité, qui endurecit les âmes foibles, amollit les
cœurs altiers; et rien n'est plus doux qu'un Héros
après le gain d'une bataille. MARMONTEL.

THE morning of Coutras was perhaps the most fortunate in the life of Henry the Fourth; yet how often before the close of day must that generous heart have been wrung! The sternest warrior acknowledges the wide difference between commanding destruction in the heat of battle, and surveying, in cold blood, the devastation that death has made; how mixed then with painful sensations must have been the highest triumphs of Henry, who, to the hero's unshaken soul, united the heart of more than woman's tenderness!

The flush of triumph was past—the
voice

voice of mercy took its turn. Having given, with the most attentive care, every requisite order for the relief of the wounded, the king of Navarre, finding that even his own quarters were filled with sufferers in the recent struggle, thought fit to transfer the scene of his evening refreshment to the castle of Coutras.

Prompt in all his movements, Henry's appearance there so quickly succeeded to the announcement of his intentions, that there was not time allowed to prepare for him, or to announce to him that the castle was almost as little suited as the royal quarters for his reception.

Alone, unarmed, at the close of day, Henry entered the vast and dimly-lighted hall. A cold chill struck on his heart; but he repressed the unwonted weakness, and summoning all his manhood to his aid, advanced up the hall, towards a table upon which something was laid, over which a cloth had been
hastily

hastily flung. Beside this object knelt the finest and most graceful young man Henry had ever beheld—the mourner was Cadet le Perle—the cloth concealed all that remained of the late gay, sanguine, exulting, duke de Joyeuse.

Henry of Navarre turned with mingled pity and horror from the sight.—“Nay, can you not brook to gaze on him?” Cadet le Perle exclaimed, rising with sternness in his look; “when I removed his corpse, I knew not that his foe held revel here.”

The king of Navarre paused; he looked on the distracted youth with an expression of ineffable pity, such pity as that with which a superior spirit may be supposed to view the wanderings of a mortal heart when too severely tried. At length he spoke, and his voice was like the balm that drops, with healing softness, into the wounded breast.—“I mark not the words of a brave soldier,” he said, “who mourns the loss of a gallant

lant friend; such words cannot offend *me*, or dishonour you. Yes, mourn, noble sir; those are tears that do you honour—mourn the loss of a friend cut off in the flower of his youth, in the career of his glory. God, who this day gave victory to the Hugonot arms, might equally have blessed those of the duke de Joyeuse, and no disaster that has overwhelmed his army can diminish the lustre of the deeds of chivalry singly performed by Cadet le Perle.”

Softened, in spite of himself, by this noble testimony to his merit given by his generous foe, Cadet le Perle had nearly forgotten the cause of enmity that still subsisted between them. In order to resist this favourable impression, he was obliged to recall it in its fullest force, and answered haughtily—
 “ I thank you, prince, for suffering me to mourn my friend; as well had it been had you not given me cause to lament my mistress. I no longer sigh in
 the

the chains of the marchioness de Noirmoutiers, yet that does not exonerate me from claiming from him who robbed me of her favour, the satisfaction of a knight. Though disguised to others, *you* know well that the birth of Henry of Navarre does not put him above the vengeance of Henry of——”

A slight smile passed over the features of the king of Navarre, and hastily interrupting the cadet, he exclaimed—
 “And has the marchioness de Noirmoutiers been able to persuade you, Cadet le Perle, of *that*? Often have I had to ask pardon of my people for a failing for which nothing but the miseries and treasons I have met with in my own family—nothing but a life spent in toils and hardships, can offer an excuse; let them forgive it, in consideration of the love I bear them; but, *vive Dieu!* never had I such cause to blush for having suffered myself to be for a moment the dupe of an artful coquette, as on finding
 it

it furnished her with arms to persuade a noble knight that I was capable of deliberate treachery."

A short conversation ensued, which ended in the total reconciliation of the two princely warriors, and their mutual contempt of the dame de Noirmoutiers, who, devoted to the interests of Catherine de Medicis, passed her life in fomenting similar misunderstandings, and under the mask of gallantry, betraying the secrets of all parties to the Machiavelian queen.

The bar thus removed that had prevented two noble hearts from understanding and appreciating each other, the reaction on each side was proportionably great; and it was over the bloody corpse of the unfortunate duke de Joyeuse that Cadet le Perle took the secret vow, whatever new circumstances might occur hereafter to separate them, never again to let any thing alter the esteem, the admiration, and the respect
he

he felt rising in his breast for the gallant Henry of Navarre.

The king ordered that the corpse of Joyeuse should be given up to Henry, viscount Turenne, with that of Claude de Saint Sauveur, his brother. Turenne was their nearest relation, and would, he knew, shew their remains every honour, though serving under the opposite banner, as so often occurred in those unhappy times. Thus closed the shortlived exultation of the enemy, who but a few hours before had boasted that he had obtained the grant of Henry's lands; but not a look, not a gesture, betrayed that he thought he had the smallest cause for triumph. Having given the necessary orders for the performance of these melancholy duties, he repaired to the chamber above, where his supper was prepared, and where his warriors waited to present to him the standards and prisoners taken in battle.

Cadet le Penle, treated with every distinction

distinction due to his *real*, not his nominal rank, found himself surrounded by the surviving warriors of Joyeuse's army, mingled with the Hugonot officers of Henry's train.

The king of Navarre was the first to press them to consider themselves as guests, not as captives; and when they learned that they were actually to be set at liberty without ransom, their arms and baggage restored, and only the wounded retained, to whom the king directed that the tenderest and kindest attention should be paid, admiration was carried to its height for the character of a young hero, who could check every emotion of exultation after a victory so decisive, and in a moment transform his enemies into admiring friends.

Rosny presented his brother Florestan anew to the king of Navarre. The impetuous and repentant youth would have thrown himself at the feet of that monarch, who never knew what it was
not

not to forgive, had not Henry of Navarre hastily prevented him.—“ Rise, chevalier de Bethune,” he eagerly exclaimed ; “ such submission is only due to God !”

The meeting between Florestan and Cadet le Perle was of a different description, and his extravagant joy at finding his beloved master not only safe but unwounded, could only be equalled by his satisfaction on discovering all the claims upon his heart united, and that he could at once pay his duty to his prince, and give himself up to his reviving attachment for his brother, and for Henry of Navarre. Cadet le Perle saw among the officers of Henry’s camp many distinguished for their rank or services.

At the table of Henry of Navarre were united the illustrious princes of Condé, of Conti, and the count de Soissons. Cadet le Perle felt unpleasantly struck with the sinister expression of countenance of the latter, though the

features of the count de Soissons were of uncommon beauty; it was at once easy to trace there the fascination that won the heart of the king's sister, and the unprincipled ambition that tried secretly to undermine the king of Navarre himself. He saw in the valiant Lesdiguières one who, from the station of a private gentleman, had raised himself, by merit and talent, to be all-powerful in Dauphiny, so as to make even the celebrated Victor Amadeus, duke of Savoy, tremble. *There* also he beheld the gallant La Trémouille, duke of Tours, whose character, distinguished alike for martial fire and mental energy, rendered him worthy to be the ally and companion of the king of Navarre. Above all these, two warriors, from opposite causes, attracted the attention of the princely stranger: the one was a man considerably under thirty years of age, of a countenance so stern, that it was scarcely possible to look on it unmoved:

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the memory of some unpardonable outrage seemed written on his dark and changeless brow; and round his left arm he wore a black scarf, as in token of cherished and perpetual mourning; yet Cadet le Perle felt himself drawn by an irresistible fascination, often to turn his eyes upon this chief, for in person he bore a striking resemblance to himself, and in features to Blanche-la-Belle.

Cadet le Perle turned to an officer who sat next him, to inform him how this dark-browed warrior was named. He could not have applied to a person more suited on any subject to give him information. Duplessis-Mornay, the most gifted and lettered of the warriors of Henry's court, readily replied—"That dark-browed and dark-scarved chieftain is Francis de Coligny, only surviving son of the admiral, and surnamed Chatillon. The fatal massacre of la Saint Barthélemi, though perpetrated

ted in his childhood, is never absent from his memory; and the black scarf bound around his arm is a needless, though a speaking memento, never to be removed till he has avenged the atrocious, the never-to-be-forgotten murder of his father. Much I fear the last act of that tragedy is to come. When will men, enlightened by philosophy, cease to place virtue in revenge, that fills fair France with scenes disastrous as the times of her first feudal barons! To what excesses has the bloody Guise——”

Cadet le Perle interrupted him impatiently—“And who is that warrior placed at the left hand of the king of Navarre?”

The knight to whom he alluded formed a contrast to the dark Chatillon: a golden star glittered upon his surcoat, of dazzling white, and a scarlet mantle assorted gallantly with the rest of his apparel.

“That knight,” resumed Duplessis-Mornay,

Mornay, smiling, "might, with Maximilian de Bethune, be pointed out as the king's chief favourite, were not our sovereign too just to distinguish any by that odious title. It is Henri de la Tour, viscount Turenne* ; you see he is distinguished by the Order of the Golden Star."

"It is an order of chivalry with which I am unacquainted," said the cadet.

"In truth it has scarcely penetrated beyond our court," replied Duplessis-Mornay ; "indebted for its origin as it is to friendship and religion, not to feats of arms. In all his feelings fervent and sincere, our monarch is more particularly so in those impressions connected with our holy faith ; considering therefore the anniversary of his baptism as that of his real birth, he, from his earliest youth, enjoined that it should be observed in preference to his birthday ; and,

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among

* From whose marriage with the heiress of Sedan and Bouillon, sprang the celebrated marshal Turenne.

among the earliest acts of his life, instituted to that effect the Order of the Golden Star, which was confined to a very select number, consisting only of such as were first and dearest in his love. The distinguishing badge was by him adopted in reference to that *Greater Star*, which guided the steps of the magi from the eastern world."

"I knew not," resumed Cadet le Perle, after this short and true history, "that you Hugonots, who have no patron saints, set such importance on your baptismal day."

"Nay," said Mornay, "our purer faith in rejecting the patronage and intercession of men once like ourselves, however they may now be glorified, only reserves its homage to carry it more completely to the Lord of light and life; we are Hugonots, not Infidels, sir knight."

The cadet blushed to perceive that the philosophic Mornay had dived into his deepest thoughts; yet, being like all the
individuals

individuals of his house, a bigotted Catholic, he crossed himself, and with seriousness replied—"So great a soul as the king of Navarre's I hope yet to see within the pale of the only true church."

Improbable as this wish was, he lived to see it fulfilled.

Numerous names, equally illustrious as those of Turenne and Chatillon, graced Henry's hospitable board, where the Hugonot officers could only be distinguished from the noble captives by the greater degree of attention the king in all things shewed the latter.

Till now, the young and illustrious stranger had erroneously imagined the professors of the Hugonot religion to consist chiefly of adventurers, or persons of humble birth. He now found, on the contrary, that the reformed faith included many of the most illustrious names in France among its ranks. He was equally struck with the mingled love and respect with which Henry of Navarre inspired his offi-

cers, who seemed to consider him at once as the prince for whom they were bound to venture their lives, and their affectionate brother in arms. He communicated these new impressions to the king with his accustomed openness, who replied—"I trust indeed they love me, else would a large debt of love on my part remain unpaid; but it is in Béarn you must see me, among my native people.—What say you, Cadet le Perle—will you yield to be my guest? you shall receive a mountain welcome; and if you love the chase, *vive Dieu!* we will shew you sport that my brother of France might envy."

Cadet le Perle replied, with his accustomed gallantry—"Nay, if I be carried a prisoner into Béarn, it must be as a slave to the princess of Navarre's bright eyes."

"Right," resumed Henry, clasping the hand of his guest within his own. "Well said that gallant knight and courteous monarch Francis the First, that 'a court

court without ladies, was like a year without spring, like the spring without roses.' *Vive Dieu!* it was wisely and excellently spoken; and if you will accompany me into Béarn, I will introduce you to such roses as France might wish mingled with her lilies in vain."

The king alluded to the princess Catherine his sister, and the celebrated Corisande d'Andoin, widow of the count de Grammont, and sometimes called countess de Guiche.

The count de Soissons could not dissemble his chagrin at this invitation given to a knight of such a mien as Cadet le Perle. The latter however would not refuse an offer that was pressed with the grace peculiar to every thing Henry said and did; and as he looked towards Florestan, to see what was to be *his* ultimate destination, the king resumed with gaiety—"All my other prisoners I set free; but you, chevalier de Bethune, remain under

the custody of the baron de Resny, by him to be disposed of as it likes him best."

Things being thus arranged that the friends should not be separated, they both prepared, not without a secret feeling of pleasure, to take a nearer view of Henry's court, as they had already of his camp, and to judge by themselves of the reputed beauty of the dangerous Catherine of Navarre.

Several times, both during the banquet and in the course of the conversation that ensued, Cadet le Perle had glanced anxiously around him, in quest of one whom he could neither discover among the prisoners, nor hear of among the dead.

The object of his solicitude was no other than the valiant, the devout, the mystic Henri de Joyeuse ; he whose actions, during the course of a long life, defied alike the comprehension and calculation of the mass of mankind, who
remained

remained ever dubious whether to class them among the offspring of eccentricity, or the results of an inspiration from Heaven. Separated in the heat of battle from his brother, who believed him lost, Henri de Joyeuse only came up in time to see that brother receive the deathwound he so eagerly sought.

The unwilling survivor of both the duke de Joyeuse and Claude de St. Sauveur, his heart sunk beneath this double calamity, and the total overthrow of the cause to which he had brought all the energies of his ardent spirit.—“Why was my worthless life spared,” he passionately exclaimed, “when the braver and worthier were laid low? *I* had no bride to lament my loss, no friend that would have mourned over my fall.—What will become of *Amenàide*?” As he asked himself this question, a sudden illumination, as from Heaven, seemed to dictate to him the course he was to pursue.—“Yes, I will go,” he cried, rising

from the stupor in which he had for a moment sunk—"I will break to her the tidings that, from another, would be her death; and then let God guide my footsteps as he pleases!" He took a fresh horse from his squire; strong in his pure intentions, he did not blush to fly: a soldier of the enemy would have stopped him—he laid him dead at his feet. Once clear of the fatal field of Coutras, little occurred to interrupt his rapid journey across the country, till he arrived at the chateau of the widowed duchess of Joyeuse in Dauphiny. His mournful duties towards her performed, the mind of Henri de Joyeuse seemed to undergo a great revolution.

It was evident his thoughts were beyond the reach of others to fathom—his sorrows beyond the reach of friendship to heal. Often, in the mysterious visions of his former life, Henry had fancied himself called from this world by an invisible power. Deprived of every

every object of which his affectionate but timid, retiring nature had clung, how gladly would life have been now resigned by him! It is such losses that first lead the survivor to consider his own mortality as a blessing: but he could not die; and religion shuddered at the attempt to cut short his own existence. He could not shorten those days, but he could devote them to God. The solitude in which he lived every day strengthened these thoughts; but he panted for a more complete solitude—a more unbounded freedom.

The duchess de Joyeuse, after the first agony of her grief, had given him the honours to which he lineally succeeded, and mournfully reminded him that the castle and all the surrounding territory was his own; but he had enjoined her to continue to reside on it; and requesting, as the only favour he demanded at her hands, that she would not seek to restrain or cross him, quitted
the

the castle, and struck into the wild and unfrequented deserts around.

Dauphiny was soon behind him, and the Alps, between Piedmont and Savoy, presented a scene of gloom and sterility that almost matched the desolation of his mind. Here, spurning beneath his feet the empty honours that seemed mockery to a broken heart, the unfortunate duke Henry de Joyeuse began to meditate and mature a plan that had often occurred in the midst of his most worldly avocations.

Resolved to dedicate himself to a religious life, still a remainder of his former habits dictated the one that should be his choice ; of all religious institutions, that of the company self-named Jesuits most fired his imagination and satisfied his heart.

The admirable order, unity, and discipline, that marked the institution founded by Loyola, the profound learning and various acquirements of its members,

members, their acknowledged utility and importance to the state, all united to give them the preference in his mind; yet, weakened by grief, it sometimes vacillated towards perfect seclusion, and he sighed for the solitude, the "waveless calm," that marked the first hermits of the desert.—"How blest," cried the illustrious enthusiast, "to wear out life in solitudes like these! to share the heaven-prepared meal with none but the solitary eagle of the rock, and to fear no human face nor human feeling interrupting the eternal aspirations after the Most High! But then again, how distinguished his lot, who enrols himself in a blessed company, where neither king nor Cæsar demand a servile homage, but the invisible superior (emblem of the Power whose servant he is) only issues forth his commands for works of utility and wisdom! Such is the 'Company of Jesus'—may I be worthy to form one of that noble army!"

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He paused to contemplate the landscape around—every moment it assumed an additional aspect of savage gloom; though his soul was strongly nerved with faith, his human heart sunk within him. At this moment he observed an upright stone, which alone bore the marks of art among the rocks of the desert; it had the following inscription :

“ A BROKEN BRANCH,
A SHIVERED LANCE,
AN EXTINGUISHED BRAND,
HE DIED WHILE YET ALIVE.
THE VICTIM OF THE MOST ATROCIOUS TYRANNY,
FORTY YEARS IN THIS SOLITUDE HE EXPIATED
THE REFUSAL TO BECOME THE PARTICIPATOR OF CRIME.
STOP, WANDERER, AMONG THESE SUNLESS SHADES,
AND LEARN, IF THEY TEMPT THEE TO A LIFE OF SOLI-
TITUDE,
THAT A GUILTY DESPOTISM — ”

Here the inscription broke off, and Henry, while he felt his blood grow chill,

chill, involuntarily looked around to see if he could not discover the author of it. A feeble, bent-down form, in a monastic habit, approached the spot; he held a graving tool in his hand, and began to work.

Duke Henry de Joyeuse approached him; his own sorrows had increased his native tendency to compassion.—“Father,” he said, “if we intrude not on the sacredness of thy sorrows, deign to disclose the name of the victim whose fate these lines record; *whose* is the tomb on which thy pious labours are employed in an inscription?”

The monk looked on him for a moment with a wild and haggard glance, and then mournfully answered—“It is my own.”

The duke stepped back a few paces, then recovering himself, resumed—“Art thou then of some company of holy brothers, who remember even in life we are in the midst of death? Be thou my
guide

guide and pattern—in the holy work I meditate I am fortunate to have found a coadjutor——”

At these words the hapless man burst into a wild and horrid laugh, and then repeated—“Coadjutor! coadjutor! yes, that was the title with which they hailed me in derision, when I was delivered over to the whips and scorpions of eternal reprobation. Too soon I found that it meant not a helper, but a broken branch—an arm cut off from the great body—a wretch condemned to endless penance and unimaginable woes.”

He cast his arms above his head in utter despair when he had ended these words, and prostrated himself on the sterile rock before his self-erected tomb. Henry found his curiosity keenly excited by this mysterious being, and resumed—“Then these solitudes are not your voluntary choice—how call you them?”

“ Know

"Know you not," resumed the awful stranger, "you are in the 'Accursed Mountains?'"

Henry started. These Alpine solitudes, that but a moment before had spoken peace to his soul, now appeared in their true colours, and frowned in their native desolation.

"Hear me!" resumed the outcast. "You are now in the infamous stronghold of a tyranny, compared to which the chain of king or Cæsar is easy, and his burthen light. I have said you are in the 'Montagnes Maudites;' the sure and secret place of punishment for those who have offended against Loyola's decrees. Brief and fearful is my story; hear it, and shun a similar chain:—"

"I belonged to the company of the Jesuits, and was intrusted with a mission of importance. As its dark secrets were gradually unfolded to me by those who set the secret springs of the community in motion, it was found they
were

were mistaken in their choice, that I shrank from the shedding of blood. What steps were to be taken?—I had been too incautiously trusted. I was recalled—summoned to the presence of the superior, who received me with a mild and gracious aspect.—‘My son,’ he said, ‘thy services have been too long neglected; thou art worthy to be named to a higher office—henceforth take the title of “coadjutor,” and go forth to aid and protect our cause.’

“I received the nomination with an insane joy, till the truth burst forth in the derision of my comrades, and I learnt that ‘coadjutor,’ or ‘*bras cassé*,’ was the name adopted by the Jesuits’ vile equivocation and infernal policy for the victim doomed to destruction. The next day I was seized, blindfolded, and borne away; I could only judge of the distance I travelled by hearing the slow passage of the horses.

“At length my guides halted—my
eyes

eyes were unbound ; I looked around me—even my persecutors had disappeared. How frightful was the sense of desolation !—I filled the air with entreaties to them to return.

“ They returned no more ; but within the cave in which I was unbound, I found a scroll, acquainting me with my dreadful doom—with the secrets of the summary and cruel punishments of the Jesuits—that I had only escaped death by being deemed dead in the world—that the funeral service had been already performed over a waxen image representing me—that I was to wear out the rest of life a wanderer among these accursed mountains, and that the slightest attempt to escape would be followed by the prompt and certain vengeance of the invisible superior, who had the dagger whetted, and the poison bowl prepared, which it would be as impossible to shun as the certain fiat of fate.”

Here ended the story of the solitary.

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He resumed his mournful occupation, and Henry felt all his resolution shaken by this interview with the victim of despotism.

To belong to a monastic order, to be subservient to a chief, who was not answerable for his decrees to any temporal power, appeared now under the colours of a hideous slavery.

Equally stripped of charms was the peaceful hermitage, when he saw that even these sterile solitudes were invaded by vain regrets. His mind floated uncertain upon a sea of vague conjecture and hesitation. His vocation was still strong, yet he shuddered at the dangers and disgusts that surrounded the step he meditated. He implored to be enlightened and directed from on high, and at length determined not to quit the desert till enabled to fix his wavering resolutions.

CHAPTER IX.

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Thus Catherine spoke, nor doubt her claim,  
 In sooth she was a witching dame.  
 The heart had ne'er been found, whose pride  
 One light request *from her* denied.  
 But most she loved *that* power to show,  
 Which changed to friend the deadliest foe.  
 For this the League's dark chiefs were seen,  
 Mingling the lilied ranks between.  
 Ah, dauntless warriors ! guard your hearts,  
 And dread the ladye's conquering arts,  
 For many a knight those smiles shall gain,  
 From Guise's rule to Henry's train.

### *The Tournament.*

It is well known, that after the battle of  
 Coutras, the disunion among the chiefs  
 prevented Henry of Navarre from join-  
 ing his German allies, and following up  
 this decisive stroke with other and  
 more

more important victories. Seeing that the principal officers of his army decided on withdrawing their troops to their several provinces, he himself adopted, with seeming alacrity, the resolution of retiring into Béarn with the count de Soissons and his newly-made and noble friend.

Another motive, perhaps, influenced him more than he would own, and contributed to make him acquiesce with a good grace in this act of necessity. Henry the Fourth, who had triumphed over every other human frailty, is but too well known to have been all his life the passionate slave of beauty; and the desire of laying the colours and trophies he had won at the feet of the fair Corisande, countess de Guiche, rendered his return into Béarn not more an act of policy than of inclination.

The court of Béarn, under the direction of Catherine, the king's sister (usually styled mademoiselle Navarre), presented

sented the assemblage of all that was gay and gracious, united to a degree of liberty that was not to be found in the court of France. Every day brought its amusement with it; so delighted was the princess Catherine with the safe return of her beloved brother, that it might be truly said, *chaque jour étoit jour de fête*.

Under such circumstances, while the guests were so mutually pleased with each other, that nothing seemed wanting to the party, and it appeared as if any addition must diminish its charm, suddenly, without any warning to prepare the minds of her hosts for such a visitation, arrived the news, that her most gracious majesty, the queen dowager of France, would honour her son-in-law and his sister with a visit, and was actually coming down with a numerous escort.

These visits to the little court of Navarre, of Catherine de Medicis, were al-



ways sure to diffuse distrust and dismay, under the mask of smiles and welcomes, as they were never undertaken by the queen but with the design of gaining some advantage, or winning some partisan from her son-in-law. Knowing that they only gave words to the secret sentiments of the princess and king of Navarre, the courtiers did not dissemble their ill-humour at this interruption to their pleasures, and canvassed her majesty's designs and usual practices with unrestrained freedom.

"Is it true," asked Cadet le Perle, who heard the news with different emotions, "that the queen-mother, at her advanced age, has undertaken so far a journey? How she must delight in travelling!"

"Delight in giving trouble, and doing mischief!" cried Duplessis-Mornay. "The old palace will not be able to receive her and her train, and we shall be half ruined in braveries and hangings, ere

ere there is a chamber reckoned fitting for the meanest of her officers."

Every one present gave his opinion in turn of the expected royal favour, and few were more flattering than those which Mornay had pronounced.

Meanwhile the news of the projected *voyage de la cour* was received by Blanche as a welcome relief. Since she had been what is technically termed "in service," she had heard much of these political journeys of Catherine de Medicis; and the idea of a change of place, of a visit to the country, and a country so rich in romantic scenery as Navarre and Béarn, was most welcome to one who, reared in retirement, languished, even in the midst of splendour, for the health and liberty she had enjoyed in the valley of Lorraine.

The mode of life followed at the little court of Lorraine was most fatiguing to one to whom early habit had rendered it familiar.

A youthful duke and duchess, freed from the burthen of state affairs by the administration of their elder relatives, spent their whole time in devising new recreations, which their courtiers executed. It was a true court of Faëry, in which nothing more serious seemed to be thought of than airy routs and revels. One day it was a masque or pageant—another a play—a third a ball, or a concert; after which, scarcely had the participators sunk to repose, in order to repair the waste of nature, when the tones of the merry horn aroused them to different but equally fatiguing amusements: the court were all in motion for the chase—the ladies were summoned to witness the triumphs of the hunters, and sleep was banished from this gay realm, as if the subjects who composed it had been immortal.

However delighted at first with a spectacle so entirely new to her, the health and spirits of Blanche soon equally began  
to

to decline. It was at this juncture that she heard the projected journey talked of; and as, among the ladies of the court, she had contracted a real friendship with none but the countess de Duilly, so, on her departure, the idea of bidding farewell to this "lone and lovely one," was the sole consideration that cost the sympathizing Blanche a tear.

The dejection of the fair countess was a subject of raillery with the maids of honour, who had given her, in derision, the title of "*la Pleureuse*," and were unable to conceive the generous pity that drew the heart of Blanche towards this child of sorrow.

The avowed object of the queen's visit to the court of Navarre, was to knit together those bonds of friendship and affinity which war too often severed—the secret one, to obtain from the victorious Henry terms of peace more advantageous than those which, immediately

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after the battle of Coutras, he had, with unprecedented magnanimity, offered to his royal namesake.

The history of those times present a picture of contradictions and inconsistencies, which, if not too well attested, would be deemed incredible. So weak and vacillating was the policy of the court of France, so jealous of all parties its miserable monarch, that it is even said Joyeuse had greatly declined in the royal favour, from the discovery that he inclined to the League; and that the king of France felt secret satisfaction in his defeat at Coutras, and held a private correspondence with the victorious army, through the interposition of the baron de Rosny.

Such being the dispositions of her son, Catherine felt herself invested with full powers to treat. All that ability could effect in negotiations of this kind was secured by the addition of Gonzaga, duke of Nevers, and other noblemen of acknowledged-

knowledge talent, to the royal party. All that female fascination could perform was prepared to surprise the heart of the sagacious but gallant monarch, whose example led the fashion in his court of devoted attachment to the fair. The levy of beauties who accompanied Catherine de Medicis on her political tours, had obtained the appellation of her flying quadron (*escadron volant*); and that no seduction might be wanting, the genius of love and poesy, in the shape of Aimar de Chastelar, who had returned unsuccessful from his German mission, was now included in the court progress, prepared to sing the triumphs of beauty, or to second the vows of heroes, as occasion should suit.

As they approached the term of their journey, the movement and animation which the prospect of a new sphere of action excited in the beauties of the court was a source of wonder and amusement to Blanche. Whispers, nods, and

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looks of intelligence, circulated around ; and the part each was to perform in the political drama was assigned to her, as if they had been the characters to be "got up" in a new play. The merits, views, and foibles of the chiefs of the Hugonot party, were well understood by these women of the world ; and each promised herself that the ardent and ambitious Turenne, the faithful Rosny, and even the cold and philosophic Duplessis-Mornay, should yield to her eloquence or her charms.

The queen-mother, who directed and encouraged all these movements, with a truly Machiavelian dexterity, at the same time preserved, in her own deportment, such an outward appearance of dignity and decorum, that the ladies most in her confidence durst seldom speak of their projects in her presence ; still some hints involuntarily escaped them, respecting "a new man," the technical term by which an important acquisition  
to

to the party was always designated. Without seeking to win their secrets from them, Blanche soon learned from the conversation of the maids of honour, that this "new man" was named the count d'Harcourt, a younger branch of the illustrious house of Lorraine, and a young prince of the highest hopes and promise—that he had been exiled from the court of Lorraine by the duke de Vaudemont, for some youthful indiscretion, and had sought and found an asylum at the court of France; but that he was now supposed to be, by choice or necessity, a guest of the king of Navarre; and she had reason to suspect that the recovery of this lost prize was one of the secret objects of Catherine's gracious visit.

In order in a more becoming manner to receive her majesty, whose presence, with the train she brought along with her, was always as welcome to Henry of Navarre and his sister, as the fall of an



avalanche to the Swiss peasant, the court of Béarn removed to Nérac, the ancient residence of the kings of Navarre, and where there were better accommodations for the two courts thus fortunately united.

A pang shot through the heart of Catherine de Medicis as she crossed the portal of the chateau d'Agen—memory was busy at her heart and brain; but soon mastering the unwelcome intruder, she prepared to meet her namesake, the princess Catherine, with the lofty dignity and courtesy that became her rank.

The princess was in readiness to receive her, surrounded by the most distinguished ladies of her court. Her beauty, like that of most princesses, had been exaggerated, for mademoiselle Navarre might in fact be styled rather agreeable than handsome; but the perfect grace of her manners was admired by all, and her powers of insinuation were

were scarcely surpassed by those of her captivating brother.

Henry of Navarre now advanced to meet the queen. She greeted him with a cordiality that seemed to spring directly from the heart.—“I trust you will not find us a burthen upon your hospitality, my son,” she said; “the desire to renew old friendships made me quit the court of Lorraine for yours, and you see we come your prisoners, unarmed, and almost unattended.”

“Call ye this unarmed, madam?” answered Henry, as, turning from the queen to her youthful attendants, he glanced his sparkling eye along the blooming band; “by my faith, it has seldom been my lot to encounter so fair and so perilous a brigade as that you lead!”

“Harmless, believe me,” replied the queen, while she secretly hailed the promise his words seemed to announce. Restored to her wonted complacency

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by his address, she now gaily yielded her hand to the king, who conducted her to the hall where they were to sup.

**CHAP.**

CHAPTER X.

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Within 'twas brilliant all, and light,
A thronging scene of figures bright;
As when the setting sun has given
Ten thousand hues to summer even,
And from their tissue fancy frames
Aërial knights and fairy dames.

Lady of the Lake.

THE queen and her ladies being seated, the knights of Henry's court were successively presented to her. On the name of the count d'Harcourt being mentioned, Blanche remembered the many particulars she had heard respecting him; but on lifting up her eyes, she could scarcely credit their testimony, when they revealed to her the memorable figure of Cadet le Perle.

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He did not leave her long to reflect upon it, but while the count de Soissons anxiously sought a place near the princess of Navarre, whom he loved, and all the other heroes of the court sought the station most suited to their several secret predilections, Henry of Lorraine placed himself nearest to the lovely Blanche, and softly whispered—“May the count d’Harcourt hope the continuance of that grace which has been extended to Cadet le Perle?”

While Blanche, blushing and agitated, endeavoured to reply, the count contemplated, with pride and delight, the striking developement of every grace produced in her by the costume of the court, and his exulting eye seemed to say—“This is *my* work!”

Sincerely as he had worshipped her in the valley of Lorraine, Henry’s was a heart to prefer the object of its homage when surrounded by all the dazzling advantages that rank and splendour

dour can bestow; he rejoiced in the happy commencement, and contemplated the future conclusion of his plan. Already he beheld her passing from the service of the aged queen-mother, to that of his blooming relative, queen Louise of Lorraine; filling successively the grades of *dame d'atour*, *dame d'honneur*, and *dame du palais*, distinguished in those eventful times equally by her gifts of mind and person, till at length he should venture, even to his family, to own his love; for Henry was still too much the slave of that world which loved him, and which he loved too well.

This was not a time however to communicate his thoughts; the queen-mother, notwithstanding she had been induced at first to prove favourable to his wishes, had her private reasons for discountenancing the attentions of the prince of Lorraine to Blanche at the court of Navarre; and Henry, perceiving her

her piercing eyes turned towards them, whispered—"To-night is inauspicious to me—to-morrow may be more favourable. Shall I challenge an audience of you for a few moments, fair Blanche, at the fountain of St. John?"

Blanche hesitated a moment; but on reflection, did not fear to infringe a duty in granting his request. Henry had plighted his faith to her in the valley of Lorraine, and had thus acquired a title to her confidence.—"I will hear you at the fountain of St. John," she said, with a soft seriousness; but the joy and tenderness that diffused itself over the countenance and manner of Henry did not permit the long duration of any feeling of resentment, and she soon resigned herself to the sweetest pleasure the deceitful world has to bestow—the enjoyment of all its most brilliant attractions in the society of the one object that is more attractive than them all.

Next

Next to the princess Catherine, the countess de Guiche, her first lady of honour, drew the most attention.

Corisande d'Andoin, countess of Guiche and Grammont, was one of those loyal and patriotic fair ones who, in those days, were willing to make the greatest sacrifices of land and fortune to support the cause they espoused. The king of Navarre owed no small obligations to her generous assistance during the last war: she was a widow at her own disposal, and common fame was busy in asserting a softer sentiment to be the cause of the heroic self-devotion of the fair Corisande. The queen-mother well knew that she was not in the interests of *her* court, and resolved to play off the machinations of her maids of honour against her on the heart of the easy-tempered king. Various as their dispositions were the charms by which these ladies were distinguished. The perfect beauty of form and feature of mademoiselle d'Ayelle designated

designated her at once as worthy to be the model of the statuary and painter; but in her the pride of beauty sometimes defeated the object of beauty itself. With every power to please, she seemed to disdain her slaves too much to wish to captivate them.—“On my truth, never did I see so bright an eye surmounted by so scornful a brow,” the king had said, and from that moment the queen had given up all hopes of mademoiselle d’Ayelle.

The next most distinguished of the maids of honour, Emilie de Mignonville, was a charming brown beauty, with contrasts that gave to her features and countenance the most striking and singular effect; for while her cheek boasted the warm carnation glow peculiar to brunettes, and her eyelashes and arching brows were of a jetty black, her eyes were of the softest blue, large, sweet, and glistening. Never had any one been gifted with a more lively vocation
for

for the part of a coquette. Affectation might almost be said to be nature with her, and coquetry rather an innate idea than an acquired habit. The desire she testified to please was not wholly an assumed desire, and for that very reason was infinitely engaging. Casting her charming eyes in sweet security around, she beheld in every knight one who had been, was, or would hereafter, prove a lover; and the welcome incense she received with a degree of gratitude and complacency, which only wanted to be lasting as it was lively, to amount to reciprocal love.

The indiscriminate facility with which Emilie de Mignonville admitted merit and demerit into her train, must certainly be admitted as the chief cause why it was always so numerous: but none who looked at, and listened long to Emilie, could continue severely to scrutinize her actions. Every thing conspired to make her a general favour-
ite—

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ite—her perfections, her deficiencies, her beauty, sweetness, gaiety, and total absence of pretension; and many a knight had worn the chains of mademoiselle Mignonville, who had broken through, or spurned those of the haughtier mademoiselle d'Ayelle.

Mademoiselle de Grancey was an Euphrosyne, to whom might be applied the old poet's sweet description of madame d'Albret:

“ Elle a très bien cette belle gorge d'albâtre,
Ce doux parler, ce clair teint, ces beaux yeux;
Mais à mon gré ce petit ris folâtre
Est en effet ce qui luy sied le mieux.”

Mademoiselle de Parthenay was “*une belle blonde*,” sentimental, deeply read in romances, and versed in the poetical decisions and decrees of former courts and parliaments of love.—Mademoiselle de Sainte-Colombe affected devotion, and experienced ambition in its most feverish and excessive degree. Bred
beneath

beneath the polished auspices of Catherine de Medicis and Marguerite de Valois, all were versed, not only in the many arts of pleasing, but in the branches of knowledge cultivated in those times ; and if they were not so innumerable as those required of a young lady at present, neither was their number contemptible. If these court ladies did not waltz, compose, learn Greek, Hebrew, mathematics, paint on velvet, model in cork, "make conundrums and cut watch-papers," they worked with the needle, danced with grace, sung, played on the lute, spoke with elegance their own and the Italian languages, and possessed a knowledge of the state of parties, the characters of distinguished leaders, and the former history of their country, far beyond that a modern miss acquires in the course of her superficial studies ; and could speak on those subjects, in consequence, with a seducing warmth and eloquence, and

and all those charms of conversation which are almost sure to carry conviction to the heart of the incautious hearer. Such was the band of "flowery-kirtled" syrens that composed the "*sacredron volant*" of Catherine de Medicis. The sixth was Blanche de Teligny, who shone, supreme in parity and innocence, among these courtly beauties, like an unsullied lily among gaudier flowers. The king, as if on his guard, and apprehensive of Catherine's designs upon him, appeared inclined to disappoint them, by devoting the greater part of his attention to herself. With hospitable courtesy he expressed his hope that she would find the accommodations prepared for her suited to her wishes.—"Our welcome must supply the place of state," the frank-hearted monarch continued; "for war and its necessities have compelled us, perforce, to dispense with braveries, and changed our court almost into a camp."

"Easily

"Easily might we reply, that all things pleased us, my son," answered the queen, in that under tone into which the royal pair had imperceptibly fallen; "but we have ever been too open of heart and frank of speech, and now it would be over late to attempt to mend. Greater joy was it to our maternal heart, it must be owned, when a dear, though imprudent child, presided at the court of Nerac, than to see another fill her chair."

The queen's eye glanced at the princess Catherine of Navarre, and the king replied with dignity—"My sister, madam, is all that my queen should have been, while my queen was always more the sister of Henry of Valois than the wife of Henry of Navarre."

This short colloquy alluded to the separation of Henry from his queen, daughter of Catherine de Medicis, after having lived with her for five years in tolerable harmony. The indiscretion,
levity,

levity, and turn for political intrigue, which Marguerite de Valois inherited from Catherine de Medicis herself, had, at length, notwithstanding her beauty and acquirements, rendered her insupportable to her husband; and it was supposed that he only waited for a favourable juncture to obtain a release from his ill-assorted and inauspicious engagement. The queen finding it vain to hope to mediate in the case of her daughter, renewed her attempts to obtain a more favourable peace for her son, disguising, as usual, the most selfish and interested views, under the appearance of the greatest candour and generosity.

For almost thirty years Catherine de Medicis had invariably assumed the amiable character of a mediatrix between contending parties — a character for which nature appeared to have qualified her, by every prepossessing gift of person, mind, and manners; yet, most unluckily,

luckily, it had always happened that this system of conciliation adopted by Catherine, had been productive of nothing but new disturbances. Whether this proceeded from want of skill, or want of good faith, in the Italian queen, was a question not difficult perhaps to be decided.

The dais under which the queen sat was formed of an azure silken canopy, in which princess Catherine of Navarre had, with studied courtesy, herself embroidered the queen's favourite symbol of the rainbow, with the motto—“*Japporte la lumière et la tranquillité.*”

The queen now alluded to it in the same spirit of courtesy; and turning to her son-in-law, with one of her most fascinating smiles, asked him if all the pains she had taken were to be productive of no advantage—she whose motto was peace, and who made it the great object and end of her life to preserve or to obtain it?

The king, who had repeatedly suffered by her Machiavelian policy, was quite revolted by her hypocrisy.—“*Vive Dieu, madame!*” he exclaimed, with unwonted hastiness; “it is not *I* that bring on the miseries of civil war—it is not *I* that prevent you at Fontainebleau from sleeping quietly in your beds; but truly you, who, with incessant intrigues and plots, prevent me from ever having a good night’s rest in mine. You are the enchantress that live but in the whirlwind, and would expire in a calm.”

The indignant, open-hearted, but gallant Henry, tried to give a sportive turn to his concluding words, in order to take off the edge from the first, which had been wrested from his indignation; and the queen, who knew but too well how much he had to forgive, affected to enter into his humour, and gaily said—“A truce, fair son. Lucky will it be for you, if we do not prolong our stay, an’ it were but only to prove we were
not

not the merciless mother-in-law you suppose. Gladly would I give you any surety for my faith. Is there any thing, my son," she continued, in a more serious tone, "that I could give, or you demand?"

"There is nothing *there* I would demand, madam," replied Henry, casting a glance of mingled resentment and scorn at the circle of fair girls that surrounded her; for he remembered with shame how often, on former occasions, she had availed herself of the charms of their manners and conversation, to overreach him: and in his determination to convince her that he saw into her artifices, and was not again to be duped by means of the witcheries with which she was surrounded, the gallantry that had marked his first address was for a moment forgotten.

These words, pronounced in a rather more animated tone, reached the ears of Blanche de Teligny, and it is impossible

to express the revulsion they produced : she had heard the court ladies talk of their plans ; she had heard of and despised those calculated looks, those studied airs, those false joys of anticipated conquest ; but never had she known the deep contempt they inspired in those on whom such arts had either succeeded or failed, as she now learned by one glance of Henry's speaking eye.—“ And does he reckon *me* among the number of contemptible coquettes thus offered to his choice ? ”

The thought shot like a burning arrow through her brain ; and the station which she had at first considered as one of splendour and distinction, now presented nothing but danger and degradation to her view.

At this moment the eyes of the king met those of Blanche, their eloquent beams still expressing the high-souled indignation of her breast. Blanche was the only one of Catherine's ladies of honour

nour whom Henry had not seen before; and never had she appeared in more radiant, more conquering beauty. Attired in the most becoming costume of the court of Henry the Third, a robe of dark velvet, trimmed with the richest point lace, set off in the greatest lustre the dazzling whiteness of her neck, round which she wore a carcanet of mingled pearls and rubies: the minute scar inflicted upon its polished smoothness was concealed by the fair ringlets of "paly gold" which fell profusely upon that throat of alabaster; and her pure complexion,

"Men che di rose e più che di viole *,"

united to the expression of terror that sometimes, as in this moment of emotion, lit up her blue eyes, all announced that her disastrous history had impressed its character upon her style of beauty, pointing her out for what she was

L 3 indeed—

* Dante.

indeed—a lovely victim, escaped by miracle from Parisian fury. As he gazed on her bright eyes and faultless features, the glorious beauty of the martyred Teligny arose, in dim perception, to the mind of the king of Navarre. Half-forgotten images of the massacre of La Saint Barthélemi—of a brave and beautiful hero immolated on that day—of his own disastrous youth and inauspicious marriage, swam before his sight, and kindled his rising passion, without being sufficiently distinct to enable him to suspect the truth; but when he learned that the bright maid before him actually bore the name of Teligny, every thing seemed explained, and the naturally-gallant king, already bitterly regretting the unadvised words that had escaped him, was led, from the circumstance, to consider Blanche with more particular attention. From such small causes often arise the events that are to influence our future lives.

With

With far different feelings another warrior present had noticed the emotion of Blanche: Chatillon had marked the kindling flash of her eye, had marked the beautiful and becoming feelings that had prompted it, and (pleased perhaps with discovering any where a spirit resembling his own) eagerly inquired the name of the modest and beautiful damsel: but when he learned it, and with it a slight sketch of her little history, it is impossible to say what feeling possessed the mastery in his agitated breast—shame at having suffered a vain, if not sinful pursuit of vengeance, so to absorb every other feeling, as to prevent his discovering that there remained a relic of his lost sister's family—regret at having continued so long unknown to so lovely a relative—and gratitude, strangely mingled with resentment, against the person who had possessed himself of this treasure, and who had

taken no pains to offer her to his view ; all these struggled a few moments with nature in his breast, but nature in the end prevailed. Looking with glistening eyes, which spoke of nothing but tenderness, on the sweet niece thus presented to his view, he resolved to seize the first interval of privacy to make himself known to her as her uncle and protector. That could not be *now*, for the king was calling upon Chastelar to contribute something to the brilliancy of the fete, by singing some lay, of which love and ladies should be the theme.

The bard readily consented ; and glancing his eyes around the lovely circle, as if to catch a ray of inspiration from their charms, he quickly began to sing—

THE ORIGIN OF CHIVALRY.

LAY OF AIMAR DE CHASTELAR.

Young Cupid, in Idalia's shade,
Thus to his mother soft complains—
" See, low are all my triumphs laid,
Deserted are my sacred fanes.

" Fair science fled, and mute each lay,
Barbaric night o'erspreads the scene ;
And savage man disowns my sway,
And joyless nymphs my arms disdain."

" I own," said beauty's queen, and sigh'd,
" Our sweet, our tyrant empire's o'er ;
But, soft !" with lightning smile she cried,
" My boy, we'll yet regain our power !

" A plan my wit divine supplies,
Its blest effect I'll instant try.
The heart to warm, to humanize,
Arise, romantic CHIVALRY !"

Thence

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Thence Cupid is again confest
The lord of ev'ry youthful breast ;
In name, but not in essence chang'd,
Since o'er Sicilian fields he rang'd ;
Then mov'd the God, a shepherd swain,
Now shines a knight on listed plain,
His soft enchantment breathes around,
Till all is Cupid's fairy ground.
Now in a tourney's ring he rides,
Now at a courtly ball presides,
Directs the minstrel's tender task,
Or laughs behind the frolic mask.
In war, he guides the champion's hand,
And glitters in his shining brand,
Teaches each shield and banner gay
Device and motto to display—
Lurks in the loveknots that declare
The colours of the favourite fair.
A scarf now hides the god of Love—
He now lies ambush'd in a glove—
Floats on the warrior's dancing plume,
Or deigns the beauty's eyes illumine,
And mantles in each dimpling smile,
And prompt instructs each witching wile;

Till

HENRY FOURTH OF FRANCH. 227

Till all, the great, the grave, the gay,
Imperial Cupid's call obey,
And princes' vows, and heroes' sighs,
Complete the general sacrifice.

“Excellent!” cried the countess Corisande to the happy and flattered poet, “Clément Marot could not have produced a sweter lay—Clément Marot, so worthy to be entitled—‘*Prince des poètes et poëte des princes.*’ Thus I crown you sovereign over all the bards of the south;” and saying this, she selected from the roses that profusely adorned the banquet a chaplet, which she placed, with her fair and delicate hands, upon the head of Chastelar.

“Ah, Rosny!” whispered the king, gazing with renewed admiration on the countess, “what would *you* give for a single rose so consecrated?”

“Just as much, sire,” replied the plain-

plain-spoken Hugonot warrior, who detested any lady that aspired to Henry's notice, "as I would give for one of the pope's consecrated roses."

On discovering that Florestan was the brother of the baron de Rosny, and a young knight of the highest hopes and family, Blanche felt a lively regret that Rose had so decidedly rejected his suit; particularly as, from the manner in which he sought to converse with her apart upon the inhabitants of the Glass Valley, she had reason to think that neither the fascinations of courts, nor the tumults of camps, had banished her sweet image from his heart. But Blanche could give him no new hopes, and "none without hope e'er love the brightest fair."

At the hour in which the gay assembly broke up, prince Henry of Lorraine turned towards her a look of which she alone understood the import,
and

and gently pressing her hand, sighed
—“ Remember the fountain of St.
John.”

END OF VOL. II.

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